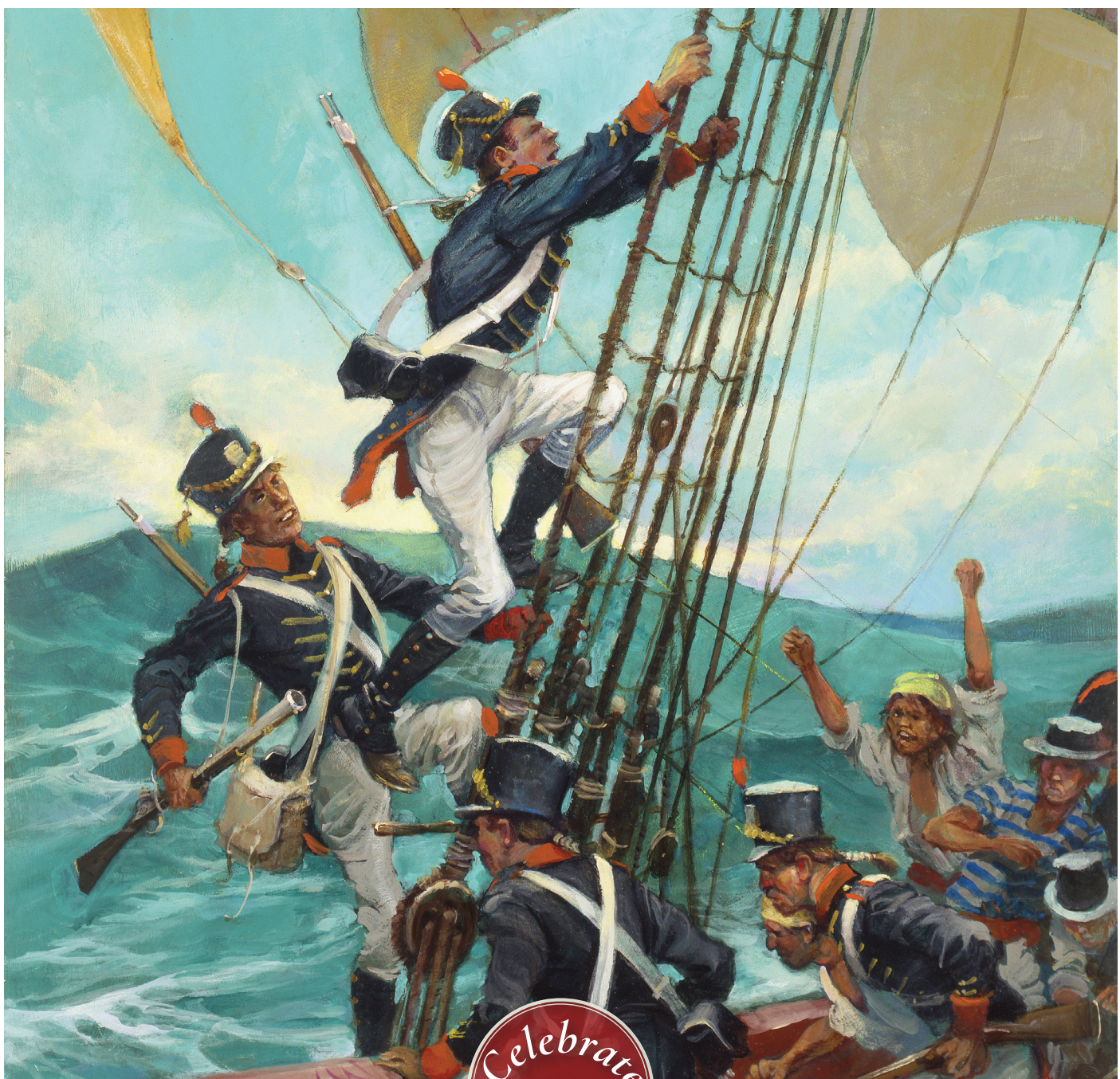
MARINE CORPS HISTORY

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2 WINTER 2024/25



Celebrate 250

Marine Corps History

Editorial Board

Dr. Zayna N. Bizri
Lecturer, History, Anthropology, and Modern Languages & Literature Department Eastern Washington University

Dr. Shawn P. Callahan
Director, Marine Corps History Division

Dr. Mark Folse
Historian, U.S. Army Center of Military History

Timothy Heck
Supervisory Historian Naval History and Heritage Command

Dr. Henry Himes
Writer's Group Marine Corps History Division

Alyson Mazzone
Archivist Marine Corps History Division

Dr. Michael F. Morris
Associate Professor, Military History, School of Advanced Warfighting, Marine Corps University

Dr. Ryan Peeks
Historian, Joint History and Research Office

Dr. Thomas Sheppard
Assistant Professor, Military History, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University

Dr. Heather P. Venable
Associate Professor, Military and Security Studies, U.S. Air Force Air Command and Staff College

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Walters
Assistant Professor, Department of International Security, U.S. Air Command and Staff College

Dr. Kathleen Broome Williams
Independent Historian

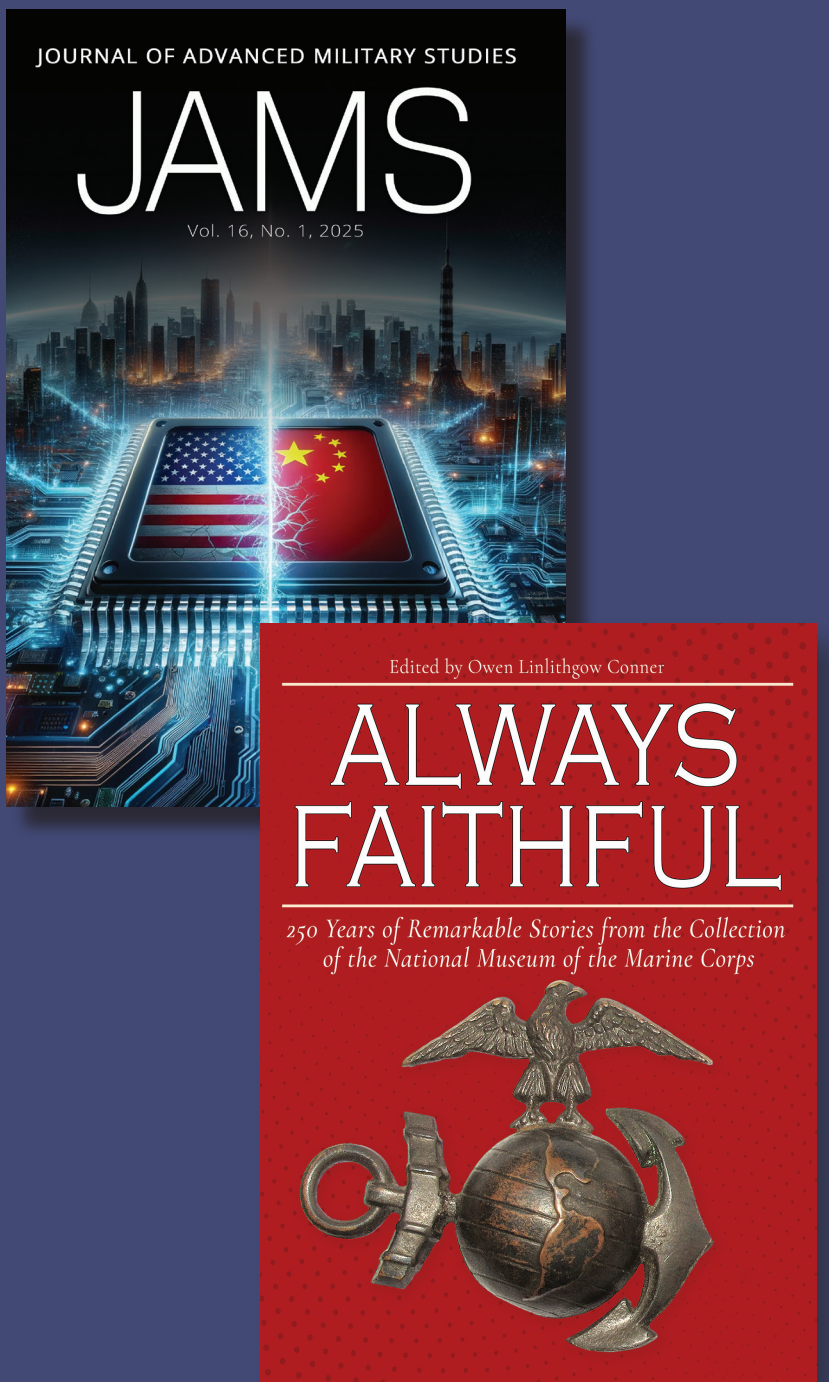
Scholarly Debate

Marine Corps History is a peer-reviewed, scholarly publication, and in that tradition we recognize that the articles published here are not the official or final word on any topic, merely the beginning of a conversation. If you think an author missed the target or failed to deliver, please join the debate by submitting an article for consideration. Email the managing editor at **stephani.miller@usmcu.edu** for deadlines and author guidelines.

Address Changes

Do not miss a single volume of *Marine Corps History* because you have moved. Send a change of address request to **mcu_press@usmcu.edu** to update your subscription.

New from MCUP


JOURNAL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES
JAMS
Vol. 16, No. 1, 2025
Edited by Owen Linlithgow Conner
ALWAYS FAITHFUL
250 Years of Remarkable Stories from the Collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps

MC UP

www.usmcu.edu/mcupress

MCUP
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRESIDENT
Marine Corps University
Brigadier General Matthew Tracy

CHIEF OF STAFF
Marine Corps University
Colonel Mark R. Reid

SERGEANT MAJOR
Marine Corps University
Sergeant Major Stephen J. Lutz Jr.

• • •

MCU PRESS
Angela J. Anderson (Director)
Jason Gosnell, Robert A. Kocher,
Stephani L. Miller, Christopher N. Blaker,
Jose Esquilin, Emily C. Howard
www.usmcu.edu/MCUPress
2044 Broadway Street
Quantico, VA 22134
Telephone 703-432-4880

• • •

COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
Department of the Navy
Headquarters Marine Corps
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon
Room 2B253
Washington, DC 20530-3000

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PCN 10600011300
ISSN 2381-375X (print)
ISSN 2381-3768 (online)

MCUP products are published under a Creative Commons NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license.

Cover art: *Marines to the Rigging,* Col Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR, courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Triangle, VA.

MARINE CORPS HISTORY

Volume 10, Number 2 Winter 2024/25

From the Editors 3

ARTICLES

The Eagle, Fouled Anchor, and 13 Stars: 5
A History of the Marine Corps' Oldest Emblem
Second Lieutenant Kevin Rosentreter, USMC

The Legacy of World War II Cryptologist Alva B. Lasswell 17
Gregory J. Nedved

The Atomic Crucible: 33
Forging Tactics in the Shadow of the Bomb
Major Robert Billard Jr., USMC

BOOK REVIEWS

Life in Jefferson Davis' Navy 45
Reviewed by Noah F. Crawford

Fidelis: A Memoir 47
Reviewed by Aaron D. Dilday, PhD

Clear, Hold, and Destroy: 49
Pacification in Phú Yên and the American War in Vietnam
Reviewed by R. Blake Dunnavent, PhD

Afghanistan: 51
A Military History from the Ancient Empires to the Great Game
Reviewed by Lee W. Eysturlid, PhD

The Pen and the Sword: The U.S. Naval Institute, 1873–2023 53
Reviewed by Lieutenant Junior Grade Josh Hano, USN

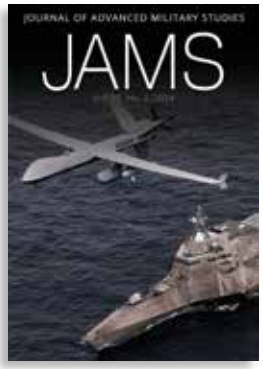
The Virtuous Wehrmacht: 55
Crafting the Myth of the German Soldier on the Eastern Front, 1941–1944
Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Heck, USMCR

The Rise and Fall of an Officer Corps: 58
The Republic of China Military, 1942–1955
Reviewed by Major Bobby Jorgensen, USMCR

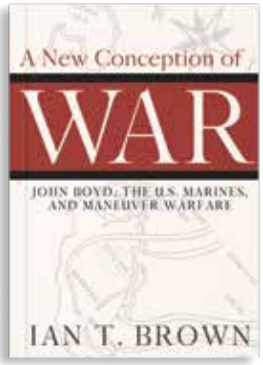
Managing Sex in the U.S. Military: Gender, Identity, and Behavior 61
Reviewed by Tamala Malerk, PhD

THIS VOLUME IS FREELY AVAILABLE AT WWW.USMCU.EDU/MCUPRESS

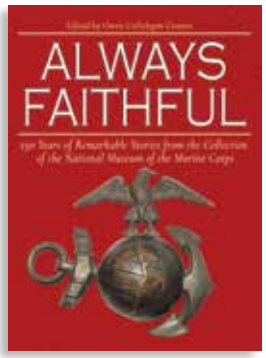
MCUP TITLES ON THE COMMANDANT'S PROFESSIONAL READING LIST



Journal of Advanced Military Studies (JAMS)



A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U.S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare by Ian T. Brown



Always Faithful: 250 Years of Remarkable Stories from the Collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps Edited by Owen Linlithgow Conner

Washington's Marines: 64
The Origins of the Corps and the American Revolution, 1775–1777
Reviewed by Rich Myrick, PhD

My Darling Boys: A Family at War, 1941–1947 66
Reviewed by Suzanne Pool-Camp

Containing History: 67
How Cold War History Explains US-Russia Relations
Reviewed by Phil W. Reynolds, PhD

How to Fight a War 69
Reviewed by Charles Nathan Swope

MCUP Marine Corps University Press offers a variety of scholarly publishing opportunities for faculty, staff, and graduate-level students. In addition to a full catalog of monographs covering Marine Corps history and national security/international relations topics, MCUP also publishes three journals annually.

Expeditions with MCUP
Expeditions with MCUP, an online academic journal, offers authors a forum for the debate of trending domestic and international topics. Articles cover topics ranging from national security, international relations, political science, and geopolitics as they apply to and impact the Department of Defense, Department of the Navy, and Marine Corps.

Marine Corps History
MCH is published twice a year on topics within the long history of the Corps: Civil War, Spanish-American War, Banana Wars, WWI, WWII, Korea, Cold War, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and women and minorities in the military. Articles must focus on some aspect of the Corps, either directly or indirectly, including foreign marines and joint operations.

JAMS
The *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* focuses on topics within the international relations, political science, security studies, and political economics spectrum. The Fall 2025 issue of JAMS focuses on AI and disruptive technology. Article submissions are due by 31 May 2025. Book reviews, review essays, and historiographical essays also welcome.

Article submissions for all three journals should be between 4,000 and 10,000 words, footnoted, and formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* (17th edition). For more information about submission guidelines or to submit an article idea, please visit our website or contact MCU_Press@usmcu.edu.

www.usmcu.edu/mcupress

MCUP
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY PRESS

FROM THE EDITORS

November 2025 officially marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of the U.S. Marine Corps. On 10 November 1775, the second Continental Congress passed a resolution that "two Battalions of marines be raised . . . to serve for and during the present war between Great Britain and the colonies." The first Marine Corps of the United States was created before the nation came into being, as the original 13 states were still technically colonies of Great Britain but were well on their way to declaring their independence. We begin 2025 preparing to mark the semiquincentennial of the nation, its military forces, and, for the purposes of this publication, the Marine Corps.

While most celebrations of this momentous anniversary will happen near the official birthday in November, now is a good time to reflect on the storied and often tumultuous history of the Corps. From its origins in 1775 as a shipboard force to the twenty-first century focus on expeditionary advanced base operations, the Marine Corps has been a fixture throughout the history of the country. The first Marines served primarily as shipboard security. While they were ever-ready to engage in amphibious landings, their primary duty was to keep order on ship if the sailors ever grew too rowdy—or mutinied outright. Still, the Marine Corps established its reputation as a fighting force early. The first amphibious landing by American Marines took place before there was an independent America. A strike on Fort Nassau in the Bahamas on 3 March 1776 marked the beginning of a long history of ship-to-shore action by Marines. The opening lines of the "Marine's Hymn" reference actions on "the shores of Tripoli" in 1805 and Marines' later service in combat in the Mexican-American War of 1846–48. World War I opened a dramatic new chapter in the history of the Corps, as Marines emerged as an elite ground force combating German troops on the western front, most famously as the "Devil Dogs" of the Battle of Belleau Wood. During the next two decades, the force adapted again, refining the technology and techniques of amphibious landings for twentieth-century total war. Its history throughout 250 years has been one of constant adaptation to the demands and challenges of a changing world, while remaining rooted in enduring values. This commitment to change and stability is reflected in the traditions that unite all Marines across time, but it is sustained by the work of each individual who dons the uniform.

In this issue, *Marine Corps History* highlights the full scope of the Corps' storied history at both the individual and group level. Kevin Rosentreter's article takes the reader back to the earliest days of the American republic, exploring the evolution of the Marine Corps' uniform button insignia. While the iconic Eagle, Globe, and Anchor emblem was not formed until after the Civil War, Rosentreter's research shines a spotlight on the period between 1798 and 1821, when the Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy largely shared uniforms, including the insignia stamped on their buttons. It was New Englander Aaron M. Peasley, a convicted felon who turned to honest work follow-

ing a pardon, who crafted the first Marine Corps emblem—one that is still in use today on uniform buttons. Rosentreter's detailed research captures the history of that emblem, and draws attention to one of the forgotten ways Marines of today remain connected to a heritage dating back to the republic's infancy.

Gregory J. Nedved brings us into the twentieth century with a focus on the role of cryptanalysis and cryptoanalysts in warfare. While his subject, Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, is celebrated among Marines for his role in the Battle of Midway and the successful targeting of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Nedved gives us the full story of his eventful life and career. Denied a combat command because of his unique skills, Lasswell has largely been forgotten today, but his contributions during World War II were significant enough that Admiral Chester W. Nimitz recommended him for a Distinguished Service Medal. He was denied this honor, but finally receives credit for his service in these pages through Nedved's illumination of his life.

Finally, Major Robert Billard Jr. examines the Marine Corps during the Atomic Age. After the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki wrought dramatic transformation in warfare, the Marine Corps struggled to maintain its relevance in the face of this development. While the atom bomb has not been detonated since Nagasaki and nuclear weapons have mercifully never been employed on the battlefield, the training efforts of Marine Corps Test Unit no. 1 (MCTU 1) were a logical response to the fear of the nuclear battlefield that haunted every Service in the early days of the Cold War. Their story is an important part of Marine Corps history, and as Billard rightly notes, it is not necessarily complete. Nuclear weapons remain a fact of today's security environment, and as long as "nuclear arms persist in the world," MCTU 1's "lessons may yet prove necessary."

Taken together, these articles show a Service in a constant state of evolution, yet ever-committed to its core values. Nedved shows the significance of a single individual in equipping the Corps to win wars, while Billard points to leadership empowering specialized units to develop tactics that will apply across the entirety of the Corps. Holding these concepts together are the traditions and values encapsulated in Rosentreter's story of the first Marine Corps button insignia. As the Marine Corps moves into its next 250 years, history will remain a consistent guide for equipping its servicemembers to face whatever challenges of the future confront it. A full understanding of that history is dependent on scholars digging into the sources and sharing their analyses.

The issue closes with a selection of book reviews on a variety of military history subjects to guide readers toward new and valuable resources. As always, the editors are eager to receive article submissions from those whose passion and expertise make the history of the Marine Corps available and accessible to readers, including submissions of historiographical essays examining the extant sources on the Marine Corps' history and the shape of scholarly debate on specific events or actions or on broader general history topics. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on these topics and to your future participation as an author, reviewer, or reader. Junior faculty and advanced graduate students are encouraged to submit articles and book reviews, as well. Join the conversation and find us online on our LinkedIn page (https://tinyurl.com/y380xnp5), at MC UPress on Facebook, MC_UPress on Twitter, and MCUPress on Instagram, or contact us via email at MCU_Press@usmcu.edu for article submission requirements and issue deadlines.

Happy 2025 and semper fidelis!

•1775•

The Eagle, Fouled Anchor, and 13 Stars

A HISTORY OF THE MARINE CORPS' OLDEST EMBLEM

By Second Lieutenant Kevin Rosentreter, USMC

Abstract: Large swaths of the U.S. Marine Corps' history have yet to be entirely understood by scholars and Marines alike. A considerable gap in knowledge exists pertaining to the usage of the emblem used on the buttons of the Marine Corps' service alpha and dress blue uniforms today. Many confuse this device of an eagle, fouled anchor, and 13 stars for the Corps' famed Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (EGA) emblem, which was commissioned in 1868 by Commandant General Jacob Zeilin, nearly five decades after the button insignia made its first appearance. The history of the Marine button emblem is closely tied to the Corps' naval heritage. This research illuminates its origins, shedding light on a previously obscured, yet salient, chapter in Marine Corps history.
Keywords: Marine Corps emblem, Dr. Theodore F. Marburg, Aaron Merrill Peasley, uniform buttons, naval history, War of 1812, Archibald Henderson

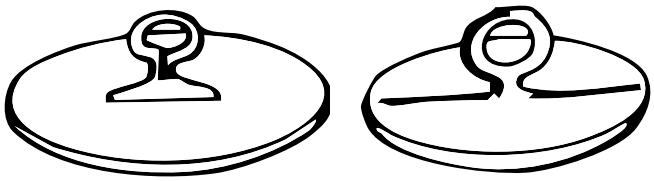
Introduction

A considerable gap in knowledge exists pertaining to the creation of the device bearing an eagle, fouled anchor, and 13 stars that is used on the buttons of the U.S. Marine Corps' service alpha and dress blue uniforms. Many confuse this image of a bald eagle clutching a fouled anchor and topped by an arc of 13 stars, for the Corps' more widely used Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (EGA) emblem, which was commissioned in 1868 by General Jacob Zeilin, the seventh Commandant of the Marine Corps. The button emblem made its first appearance nearly five decades earlier, and its history is closely tied to the Corps' naval heritage. This research illuminates its origins, ultimately shedding light on a previously obscured, yet salient, chapter in Marine Corps history.

The Marine Corps' uniform button emblem is one of the oldest used by any U.S. Service branch to date, but the history behind its creation has been obscure. Through primary source and archival research, this emblem's beginnings can be revealed, as well as the identities of its earliest confirmed commissioner and manufacturer. This article traces the emblem's origin back to the Charlestown Naval Yard in Massachusetts, the birthplace of the U.S. Navy's first commissioned ship of the line, the USS *Independence* (1776), and to die-sinker Aaron Merrill Peasley, who was possibly responsible for designing the Corps' first emblem for uniform buttons. Peasley may also have been the first person to die-sink the emblem, which is still used—in an updated form—on Marines' service alpha and dress blue uniforms.

2dLt Kevin Rosentreter holds a bachelor of arts in history, a certificate in Arabic studies from Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, and has been active-duty in the U.S. Marine Corps since July 2009. https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2340-2172
https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2024100201

Author's personal collection
Figure 1. This is an example of the modern Marine Corps button currently used on Marine Corps dress uniforms.



Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, adapted by MCUP
Figure 2. (Left) An example of a one-piece button with an omega shank.
Figure 3. (Right) An example of a one-piece cast button.

What's in a Button

The button to which the eagle, fouled anchor, and 13 stars were first applied is classified as a stamped one-piece brass button with an omega shank.[1] A stamped button used a blank manufactured button onto the front and/or back of which the maker die-sank a design. There are also early examples showing buttons being used with preexisting designs from multiple different agencies in the government. One-piece buttons resemble a flat disc, like a planchet used in coin-making. These planchets would have most likely come from England during the period of the Marine emblem's inception, as it was cheaper and the United States at this time lacked both the tradesmen and the technological capability to make high-quality buttons, unlike England.[2] However, the records do not indicate that it was cheaper to have the buttons die-sunk in England.[3] The omega shank, so-called because it resembled an omega symbol, required a stronger wiring that would be able to withstand harsh conditions such as those at sea. Shanks used would vary by tradesman, but typically each die-sinker had a preferred type of shank and button they would use. One other example of buttons during this time are cast buttons, which are cast from molds and have a distinct line on the back of the button when the button was taken out of the mold. There are two-piece and three-piece buttons; however, due to technological limitations, these were not manufactured until a later period and were introduced well after the Marine Corps uniform regulations of 1821, which will be explained later.

The profession of a die-sinker, now long phased out by modern technology, was a profession that took years to master, and during the early nineteenth century the United States had very few individuals with this skill set. Die-sinkers were paid very well and were hard to come by, as shown through early correspondence from the button and sewing hardware firm Scovill Manufacturing Company.[4]

Early in the nineteenth century, the uniforms worn by U.S. Navy personnel were slowly developing their own personality. This article will but brush the surface of early uniforms of the U.S. Navy and concentrate on the buttons worn on naval uniforms according to the Naval Uniform Regulations from 1798 to 1821.

[1] Jennifer Aultman and Kate Grillo, "DAACS Cataloging Manual: Buttons," PDF, DAACS Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery, June 2018; and Alphaeus H. Albert, *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*, 6th ed. (Boyertown, PA: Boyertown Publishing, 1977), 7.
[2] Marburg, "Brass Button Making, 1802–1852. Part I, The Early History of the Scovill Enterprise," *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (January 1946): 19–34.
[3] Marburg, "Brass Button Making, 1802–1852. Part I, The Early History of the Scovill Enterprise," 19–34.
[4] Theodore F. Marburg, "Button Making at the Scovill Enterprise 1802–1852, Part III, Casting, Rolling, and Stamping," *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin* 5, no. 3 (July 1946): 159–74.

Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command
Figure 4. The 1797 U.S. naval uniforms (from left to right): purser, captain, midshipman, surgeon, lieutenant, and sailing master.

Courtesy Naval History and Heritage Command
Figure 5. U.S. naval officers and seamen, dress uniforms, 1812–15.

Who Were Buttons Made For?

Following the Act Establishing the Navy and Act for Establishing and Organizing a Marine Corps in April and July 1798, respectively, the Marine Corps and Navy were created to be technically separate entities, however their uniforms were effectively the same with minor differences.[5] The emblems used on their buttons came from the 1798 Navy Uniform Regulations pertaining to the dress uniform for Navy officers. According to Edwin N. McClellan's *Uniforms of the American Marines*, the original buttons were composed of a "yellow metal eagle, with shield on left wing, enclosing a foul [*sic*] anchor."[6] This pattern would be changed in 1802 to "the buttons of yellow metal, with the foul [*sic*] anchor and American eagle, surrounded with fifteen stars."[7] The latter would also be reiterated in the Navy Uniform Regulations of 1814 and would hold true in the Navy Uniform Regulations until 1821, when a clear distinction between Navy and Marine buttons was stated.

Fifth Commandant of the Marine Corps Archibald Henderson ensured the uniformity of his Marines was included on the proposal for uniform

[5] An Act to Establish an Executive Department to Be Denominated the Department of the Navy, 30 April 1798, Chap. 35, *Congressional Record*, 5th Cong., 2d Sess., 553–54; and An Act for the Establishing and Organizing a Marine Corps, 11 July 1798, Chap. 72, *Congressional Record*, 5th Cong., 2d Sess., 594–95.

[6] Maj Edwin North McClellan, *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1982), 6.

[7] R. Smith, "Uniform Regulations, 1802," Naval History and Heritage Command, 23 August 2017.

regulations the Navy published in May 1821. This was the first time the term *Marine button* was used under the officers undress uniform section in a proposal to the secretary of the Navy, dated 15 May 1821.[8] Under the Naval General Orders established 10 May 1820, it is stated "the buttons are to be as described in the drawing No. 1," but unfortunately, no drawings have been found pertaining to this statement.[9] However, a button pattern book from an English button manufacturer in 1826 shows U.S. Navy buttons numbered one through five, showing the patterns made by the manufacturer.[10] There may also be a more direct connection between then-captain Henderson and the Marine Corps button emblem; it is possible that Henderson commissioned it, as he was stationed in the Charleston, Massachusetts, naval yard from September 1812 to August 1813 and he was the Commandant who standardized the Corps' uniforms in 1821, using the emblem under discussion here.[11] This cannot be proven with current primary sources available and is only circumstantial at this point in the author's research.

Until 1821, both officer and enlisted Marine uniforms used Navy buttons. Enlisted Marine uniforms used Navy buttons until the 1830s. Because officer uniform buttons were purchased independently, these Marines had a choice in where to obtain their buttons. Figure 6 (see p. 10) shows an example of a button bearing the typical naval button emblem—an eagle holding a shield bearing the fouled anchor, which was commonly worn by Marine officers. The bald eagle has been a staple of U.S. heraldry since its use in 1782 on the Great Seal of the United States of America.[12] The 15 stars incorporated in this design pertain to U.S. naval regulations of 1802, however in 1804 the United States encompassed 17 states.[13] It is not known why this specific number of stars was selected, but it can be surmised for later examples to include 13 stars for the original 13 colonies. The shield the eagle holds most likely represents protection while the anchor symbolizes naval heritage and maritime history.

The button shown in figure 11 (see p. 12), which bears the device of an eagle, fouled anchor, and 13 stars along with Peasley's backmark, is currently the oldest known example of the Marine Corps emblem. It was found in an isolated area on land that was once owned by the Vernon family in the greater Oyster Bay, New York, area until the land was sold in 1834. The Vernons were a prominent family in the area and have several War of 1812 connections, including family member James Vernon, who fought for a New York militia out of Brooklyn, New York.[14] U.S. Navy surgeon's mate Samuel Vernon, who served from 11 January 1812 until 5 February 1814, served on board the USS *United States* (1797) during the War of 1812 under legendary captain Stephen Decatur, known to have been docked in the Charleston Navy Yard July – October 1813 and in the New York Navy Yard in December 1813 after the *United States*'s victory over HMS *Macedonian*. Vernon was from Middlesex, New Jersey; family ties are still being established between these two Vernon families.[15] Whether this button found on the Vernon property was worn by Samuel Vernon is still unclear, however the implications of a U.S. Navy surgeon's mate possessing a button stamped with the earliest known Marine Corps emblem is something that would need to be covered separately from this publication.

[8] McClellan, *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829*, 74.
[9] *Naval General Order: Navy Uniform* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of the Navy, 10 May 1820).
[10] Bruce S. Bazelon and William Leigh, *American Military Buttons: An Interpretive Study—The Early Years, 1785–1835* (Woonsocket, RI: Mowbray Publishing, 2024), 74.
[11] Detachment of Marines, Charlestown, MA, Navy Yard muster roll (Mroll), September 1812, United States Muster Rolls of the Marine Corps, 1798–1937, Roll 3 1810 January–1812 December, FamilySearch.org, image 593 of 707; Detachment of Marines, Charlestown, MA, Navy Yard MRoll, August 1813, United States Muster Rolls of the Marine Corps, 1798–1937, Roll 4 1813 January–1814 June, FamilySearch.org, image 212 of 503; and McClellan, *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829*, 69–74.
[12] "The Great Seal," National Museum of American Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State, 19 March 2018.
[13] Smith, "Uniform Regulations, 1802."
[14] War of 1812 Survivor's Pension certificate of James Vernon, Department of the Interior, 6 November 1871, author's personal collection; and Edward W. Callahan, ed., *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900* (New York: L. R. Hammersly, 1901), 560.
[15] Edgar Stanton Maclay, *A History of the United States Navy, from 1775 to 1898*, vol. 12 (New York: D. Appleton, 1898), 389; and Samuel Vernon to Paul Hamilton, secretary of the Navy, 12 January 1812, Record Group 45, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Letters Received Accepting Appointments as Midshipmen, 1809–39, Entry 122-I18, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

Variations to Navy buttons can be observed in the leading books on military buttons, such as *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons* by Alphaeus H. Albert; *Uniform Buttons of the United States: Button Makers of the United States, 1776–1865, Button Suppliers to the Confederate States, 1800–1865, Antebellum and Civil War Buttons of U.S. Forces, Confederate Buttons, Uniform Buttons of the Various States, 1776–1865* by Warren K. Tice; *The Emilio Collection of Military Buttons: American, British, French And Spanish, with Some of Other Countries, and Non-Military* by Luis Fenollosa Emilio; and *American Military Buttons: An Interpretive Study—The Early Years, 1785–1835* by Bruce S. Bazelon and William Leigh.[16] Coincidently Bazelon and Leigh's interpretative study was published while the author researched this article and now is the leading book on early United States buttons. Coupled with modern technology, many military buttons can be found online through auction websites such as eBay or Auction Zip and compared to buttons in these books. With the variations presented in these books, the differences can be observed in the interpretation of the uniform regulations and general orders from the producers of the era.

Aaron Merrill Peasley

Aaron Merrill Peasley (also spelled Peaslee, 2 July 1775–6 April 1837) was born in Hanover, New Hampshire, and he first appears to have worked as an engraver in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1802.[17] He is credited with multiple engravings, including *A Plan of the Town of Exeter* and *A Plan of the Compact Part of the Town of Exeter* both in 1802.[18] Peasley also created multiple engravings for the book *The American Coast Pilot* by Edmund M. Blunt and Captain Lawrence Furlong in 1804 and an engraving of French religious figure Jacques Saurin and a patent corn sheller.[19] In the spring of 1804, Peasley was arrested in Newburyport and convicted in Ipswich, Massachusetts, for the possession of counterfeit bank notes made for the Beverly Bank and the possession of tools to make counterfeit silver coins. He was sentenced to five years in jail and to hard labor, but as a follow-on sentence, he would serve another five years if he did not pay restitution for his crime.[20]

During Peasley's incarceration, he was moved to the Charlestown State Prison, located just north of Boston, due to overcrowding at the jail where he was initially imprisoned.[21] Despite a possible sentence of up to 10 years in jail and hard labor, Peasley submitted multiple petitions for an early release because of his reformation in prison, claiming to be "seduced to be an instrument" to forge the counterfeit bank note plates.[22] Peasley was pardoned 8 March 1808 and shortly thereafter began using his talents with metal to great effect in the greater Boston area.[23]

As a die-sinker, Peasley was able to shape steel into a die by softening it and carving a design into its surface before hardening it again.[24] This skillset

[16] Albert, *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*; Warren K. Tice, *Uniform Buttons of the United States: Button Makers of the United States, 1776–1865, Button Suppliers to the Confederate States, 1800–1865, Antebellum and Civil War Buttons of U.S. Forces, Confederate Buttons, Uniform Buttons of the Various States, 1776–1865* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1997); Luis Fenollosa Emilio, *The Emilio Collection of Military Buttons: American, British, French and Spanish, with Some of the Other Countries, and Non-Military in the Museum of the Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts* (Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1911); and Bazelon and Leigh, *American Military Buttons*.

[17] Aaron Peaslee, New Hampshire Birth Records, Early to 1900, database, FamilySearch.org, 21 October 2022.

[18] P. Merrill, *A Plan of the Compact Part of the Town of Exeter at the Head of the Southerly Branch of Piscataqua River*, Newburyport, Massachusetts: A. Peasley, 1802.

[19] Lawrence Furlong, *The American Coast Pilot Containing the Courses and Distances Between the Principal Harbours, Capes and Headlands, from Passamaquoddy, Through the Gulf of Florida: With Directions for Sailing into the same, Describing the Soundings, Bearings of the Light-Houses and Beacons from the Rocks, Shoals, Ledges, &c.: Together with the Courses and Distances from Cape Cod and Cape Ann to Georges' Bank, Through the South and East Channels, and the Setting of the Currents with Latitudes and Longitudes of the Principal Harbours on the Coast, Together with a Tide Table*, 4th ed. (Newburyport, MA: Edmund M. Blunt, 1804), 135, 136, 141, 143, 152, 168, 177, 182, 186; and A. M. Peasley, *Jacques Saurin*, nineteenth century, line and stipple engraving on cream laid paper, Worcester Art Museum Charles E. Goodspeed Collection, Worcester, MA.

[20] A. Haswell, "More Money Makers," *Vermont Gazette* 2d ed., no. 6 (8 May 1804): 3; and Commonwealth vs. Peaslie [*sic*] for Making a Plate for Counterfeiting Bank Notes and for Being Posessed of Tools for Counterfeiting Money, April Term, 1804, Court Records 1802–1805, Essex County Court House, Salem, MA, 258–60, MSSC 4, roll no. 2123, via FamilySearch.org.

[21] Intake entry for Aaron Peasley, 3 May 1804, HS9.01/series 285X, Daily Reports, Charlestown State Prison, Charlestown, MA.

[22] Early release petitions and pardon and discharge proclamation of A. Peasley, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 8 March 1808, GC3/series 328, Council Pardon Files, box 3, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, MA, hereafter Peasley pardon proclamation.

[23] Peasley pardon proclamation.

[24] Marburg, "Button Making at the Scovill Enterprise 1802–1852, Part III, Casting, Rolling, and Stamping," 159–74.

Author's personal collection
Figure 6. NA 45v backmark "***U.S.*** MARINE."

was highly sought after, to the extent that even as a convicted felon Peasley was able to establish multiple contracts with the U.S. government only four years after being released from prison. Peasley manufactured buttons for multiple government agencies, one of which was the Corps of Artificers, only an active unit from April 1812 to 1815.[25] These dates establish that Peasley made buttons as early as 1812, confirmed through his backmark of the Corps of Artificers unit; they also assist in narrowing the time frame of the creation of the Marine Corps button emblem's specific design. Primary-source research into Peasley's background and timeline is corroborated through the archives of the Boston Directory and archived Boston property records. Located in the Boston Athenaeum, an institution for literary and scientific study, the directory reveals that Peasley was working in the Boston area from 1810 (under the name spelling of Peasly) to 1823 and that in the year 1816 he is classified as a die-sinker.[26]

The Details in the Buttons

It has been established that Peasley was an early American die-sinker of one-piece buttons in the Boston area. However, to substantiate that he is indeed responsible for manufacturing the earliest known Marine Corps buttons bearing the aforementioned emblem, the elements of which still form the basis of the device found on Marine buttons today, we must first explore his unique style and works. Peasley leveraged a distinct approach when designing dies for his Marine Corps emblem, but the easiest way to differentiate his from those made by all later and similar personnel manufacturing Marine Corps buttons is the rope found at the bottom of the button, stemming off the anchor. Peasley's rope follows the curve of the button's edge; no other producer of Marine Corps buttons used this distinctive design element, as will be shown through examining examples by his competitors.

Author's personal collection
Figure 7. NA 57D, backmark "A. M. PEASLEY / BOSTON."

Figures 10 through 19 all share the designation MC, letters that are used as classification markers in Alphaeus H. Albert's book *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*, first published in 1969, and are still employed today.[27] Despite each of these buttons having different backmarks, each button shares a near-identical front die strike. The dies used would have been made by hand, meaning that despite slight

[25] Capt Oscar F. Long, "The Quartermaster's Department," in *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief*, ed. Theo. F. Rodenbough and William L. Haskin (New York: Maynard, Merrill, 1896), 38–66; and William F. McGuinn and Bruce S. Bazelon, *American Military Button Makers and Dealers; Their Backmarks and Dates*, 2d ed. (Chelsea, MI: BookCrafters, 1988).

[26] *The Boston Directory* (Boston, MA: Edward Cotton, 1810), 153; *The Boston Directory* (Boston, MA: E. Cotton, 1816), 170; and *The Boston Directory* (Boston, MA: C. Stimpson Jr. and J. H. A. Frost, 1823), 180.

[27] Albert, *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*, 109.

Author's personal collection
Figure 8. NA 66 backmark "A. M. PEASLEY / BOSTON."

Courtesy of William Leigh Collection
Figure 9. An example of a Corps of Artificers button, with the backmark "* A.M. PEASLEY * * BOSTON."

differences, the same die-sinker made them.[28] Theodore F. Marburg discussed the reasoning behind using different backmarks in the National Button Society's quarterly publication in 1946. He attested that the reason for the different backmarks was due to the pricing of the buttons and advertisement for the business. If a button were to have two different dies made, it would require more funding.[29] The buttons in figures 10 and 12 marked CLAPP AND NICHOLS TAILORS BOSTON / A.M.P. / D.S. and C. NEWMAN TAILOR (Charles Newman, proprietor) would have simply cost more and could have been the earlier works of Peasley's die-sinking career. This is surmised due to Peasley establishing connections within Boston. Being recently released from prison would have required him to seek work through different modes of employment. The tailors in this period did not have the capability to die-sink buttons, but working with tailors would have allowed him to start building connections with military personnel, advertised his work through the tailor's business, and provided a steady income stream. No other (later) examples of Peasley's buttons indicate that he worked with any other tailors after establishing himself as a superior die-sinker.

The only known instances of D.S. being used on the back of Peasley's buttons are on those marked CLAPP AND NICHOLS TAILORS BOSTON / A.M.P. / D.S. and on the Corps of Artificers buttons (dating to 1812–15). It can be determined by an entry in the *Boston Directory* that Charles Nichols and Chester Clapp (entered as Clap and Nichols, tailors) were documented as business partners as early as 1806, but they were no longer in business together after April 1818, when their "Copartnership Dissolved."[30] Despite this still predating the 1821 Naval Uniform Regulations and establishing a no-later-than date of April 1818 for the Clapp and Nichols button presented in figure 11, newspaper advertisements for Clapp and Nichols Tailors indicate that they employed Peasley in August 1811 by the inclusion of the statement "gilt plated, and steel Buttons: Infantry and Navy," rather

[28] Bazelon and Leigh, *American Military Buttons*, ix.
[29] Marburg, "Button Making at the Scovill Enterprise 1802–1852, Part III, Casting, Rolling, and Stamping," 159–74.

[30] *The Boston Directory* (Boston, MA: Edward Cotton, 1806), 32; and "Copartnership Dissolved," *Boston (MA) Daily Advertiser*, 16 May 1818, Genealogy Bank, 2.

Author's personal collection
Figure 10. An MC 3 type button with the backmark "CLAPP AND NICHOLS TAILORS BOSTON / A.M.P. / D.S."

Author's personal collection
Figure 11. An MC 3 type button with the backmark "NE PLUS ULTRA / TREBLE GILT / STANDD COLR."

than just "plated and gilt Buttons."[31] Clapp and Nichols Tailors stopped advertising "bullet, gilt and plated, artillery, navy and engineer Buttons" between September 1815 and January 1816.[32] At no point were Marine buttons promoted in Clapp and Nichols's advertising.

The last element to be considered is the role of other stakeholders in the fabrication process. Tailors as well as naval agents played critical functions in the acquisition of these buttons. Merchandise was procured by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps in the early 1800s through naval agents located at U.S. naval ports.[33] An example of this agreement can be found in *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829*, in which correspondence between third Commandant of the Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Wharton and Philadelphia naval agent George Harrison were transcribed by Major Edwin N. McClellan. Harrison wrote,

> October 12, 1804 (Enlisted Men): As Armitage's Die is won out & he is about to have another executed, he wishes your order as to the Button you will prefer. I enclose his patterns for your selection, which return (thro same medium) pr [*sic*] return of mail. He is of the opinion that you had better do away' the stars and have an Anchor on the Button.[34]

Lieutenant Colonel Wharton responded,

> October 19, 1804 (Enlisted Men): "It will be out my department to make an alteration in the buttons. I therefore return to Mr. Armitage the card. *** Please order them to be of the former pattern *** black cloth for gaiters***

[31] Advertisement for Clapp and Nichols, Tailors, *Boston (MA) Patriot*, 6 October 1810, Genealogy Bank, 4; and Advertisement for Clapp and Nichols, Tailors, *Boston (MA) Patriot*, 31 August 1811, Genealogy Bank, 4.
[32] Advertisement for Clapp and Nichols, Tailors, *Boston (MA) Daily Advertiser*, 11 September 1815, GenealogyBank, 3; and Advertisement for Clapp and Nichols, Tailors, *Boston (MA) Daily Advertiser*, GenealogyBank, 22 January 1816, 4.
[33] Robert G. Albion, "Brief History of Civilian Personnel in the US Navy Department," Naval History and Heritage Command, 23 August 2017.
[34] McClellan, *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829*, 32.

Courtesy of William Leigh Collection
Figure 12. An MC 1 type button with the backmark "C. NEWMAN TAYLOR." This backmark is not listed in Alphaeus Albert's book.

Courtesy of Bruce S. Bazelon collection
Figure 13. An MC 3 type button with the backmark "EXTRA RICH ORANGE."

Courtesy of William Leigh collection
Figure 14. An MC 1 type button with the backmark "A M Peasley / Boston."

Courtesy of Bruce S. Bazelon collection
Figure 15. An MC 3 type button with the backmark "WISE / BIEBLY HYDE & CO / NO 5 / EXTRA FINE."

> brown linen *** white common buttons *** large common buttons."[35]

This interaction between Harrison and Wharton establishes the relationship between a naval agent and the Commandant of the Marine Corps in 1804. Despite this conversation focusing on buttons and on George Armitage, the sole provider of enlisted buttons to the Marine Corps at that time, it does not shed more light on the emblem in question. It may, however, be surmised that Peasley most likely had a relationship with the naval agent during this time, although it does not establish Peasley as the designer of the emblem. Due to naval officers being required to purchase their own uniform items, the naval agent, Amos Binney or Francis Johnnot depending on the inception date of the Marine Corps emblem, would have most likely directed the naval officers to appropriate tailors, in this case either Clapp and Nichols or Newman.[36] Eventually Peasley established personal connections with the officers and no longer had to work with tailors, so he was able to use his own backmarks, such as A.M. PEASLEY / BOSTON (see figure 8).

Peasley used a variety of backmarks on his buttons, which indicates that he did not make the Marine Corps buttons for a single client but for at most six different people. The Marine button will be explored later, but the stipulation for size and slight variations in design are a result of the vagueness in uniform regulations and indicate different orders placed by different Marines or sailors. For example, out of the surviving Navy and Marine Corps one-piece brass buttons cataloged, the vast majority vary between 21 millimeters to 24 millimeters in diameter, however, one example of Peasley's MC 1 button measures 25 millimeters in diameter. This size difference could indicate different

[35] McClellan, *Uniforms of the American Marines, 1775 to 1829*, 32.

[36] Edwin C. Bearss, *Historic Resource Study, Charlestown Navy Yard 1800–1842*, vol. 1 (Boston, MA: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1984), 55, 95.

Courtesy of William Leigh collection

Figure 16. Two MC 3 type buttons, front and back, with the backmark "*WILLIAM WALLIS * / *No 5 * EXTRA FINE." The left button measures 22.4 mm, and the right button measures 16.2 mm.

orders were made to accommodate different servicemembers and their different uniforms.

Ruling Out the Competition

Examining other manufacturers of early one-piece Marine Corps buttons during this period rules out other possibilities for the earliest confirmed manufacturer of Marine Corps buttons. The works of Albert, Tice, Emilio, and Bazelon and Leigh demonstrate examples of military brass buttons ranging from revolutionary to modern times. In addition, Marburg's research on economies and methodologies of early brass button production reveals the scarcity of die-sinkers, and Marine Corps muster roll sheets show how few Marine Corps officers were in the Corps at this time. Through these sources and others, at this time, it can be concluded that there were only seven verifiable producers of the first Marine Corps emblem onto one-piece brass buttons during this period. Along with Peasley, these producers were Wise, Bielby, Hyde and Company, using the backmark WISE / BIEBLY HYDE & CO / NO 5 / EXTRA FINE (MC 3A); William Wallis, backmark WILLIAM * WALLIS * / No 5 * EXTRA FINE * (MC 3A); Lewis and Tomes, backmark LEWIS & TOMES / EXTRA RICH / No 5 (MC 3A); Charles Jennens, backmark CHARLES JENNENS / LONDON (MC 4); W. R. Smith, backmark W. & R. SMITH TREBLE GILT (MC 4); and Scovill Manufacturing Company, backmark ***SCOVILLS***/ WATERBURY (MC 5).

The timeline of each producer closely aligns to the same general period Peasley was die-sinking his own buttons, but through the backmarks, location of producers, and designs used, it can be determined that each of the manufacturers above designed and produced their buttons after Peasley.

The manufacturers Wise, Bielby, Hyde and Company (operating around 1818), William Wallis (operating late 1790s to late 1820s), and Lewis and Tomes (operating 1816–33) all have No. 5 incorporated into their backmarks, indicating these buttons were made after the Naval General Order of 10 May 1820.[37] This seemingly minute detail is relevant because these uniform regulations enforced each button to have a designation of 1 through 4. Consequently, an amendment would have had to be adopted for the Marine Corps buttons produced during the period of inquiry by any of these makers to have a No. 5 designation. This amendment has been theorized by lead researchers of early U.S. military emblems.[38]

As stated in Marburg's writings for the *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin*, Scovill Manufacturing Company did not officially make Marine Corps buttons until 1832 for commercial purchases. Scovill Manufacturing has an extremely rich history, which Marburg employed via the Scovill archives to write an unpublished dissertation on the economics of early brass button-making and the four articles published in the *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin* in 1946. Marburg's work was invaluable for this author's research and also provides a detailed insight into the

[37] *Naval General Order: Navy Uniform.*
[38] LtCol Robert Milburn, USA (Ret), text message interview with author, 22 May 2023.

Courtesy of William Leigh collection

Figure 17. An MC 4 type button with the backmark "LEWIS & TOMES • EXTRA RICH • NO 5."

Courtesy of Bruce S. Bazelon collection

Figure 19. An MC 4 type button backmarked "CHARLES JENNENS • LONDON•."

Courtesy of William Leigh collection

Figure 18. An MC 5A type button, front and back, backmarked "***SCOVILLS*** / WATERBURY," measuring 20.4 mm, and an MC 5Av button, front and back, backmarked "<<SCOVILLS>><<EXTRA>>," measuring 15.7 mm.

beginnings of one of America's greatest button manufacturers, the Scovill Manufacturing Company.[39]

Charles Jennens, in business from 1805 to 1844, and W. R. Smith, operating from 1790 to 1831, both were London-based button makers, disqualifying them as the makers of the earliest buttons made for the U.S. Marine Corps. Relations with Great Britian were strained during this period, with the Embargo Act of 1807 affecting trade, despite its ending with the Non-Intercourse Act in March 1809.[40] The relations between Great Britian and the United States became so strained that they sparked the War of 1812, which ended on 24 December 1814 with the Treaty of Ghent.[41] U.S.-British relations would have taken time to repair, making it unlikely that London-based businesses, including die-sinkers, would manufacture buttons for a U.S. Service branch long after the war ended. Furthermore, records do not indicate it was cost-effective to have the buttons die-sunk in London, but it was cost-effective to have plain gilt buttons shipped to the United States and then die-sunk by local crafters. This was also discussed in Marburg's articles in the *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin*.[42]

[39] Marburg, "Button Making at the Scovill Enterprise 1802–1852, Part II, The Varieties of Buttons," *National Button Society Quarterly Bulletin* 5, no. 2 (April 1946): 89–107.

[40] Bill no. 26, in *Acts Passed at the First Session of the Tenth Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1808), 1–11; Bruce S. Bazelon and William F. McGuinn, *A Directory of American Military Goods Dealers and Makers, 1785–1915* (Woonsocket, RI: Andrew Mowbray Publishing, 2006), 67, 199; Albert, *Record of American Uniform and Historical Buttons*, 110; and Bill no. 26, in *Acts Passed at the First Session of the Tenth Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1810), 520–524.

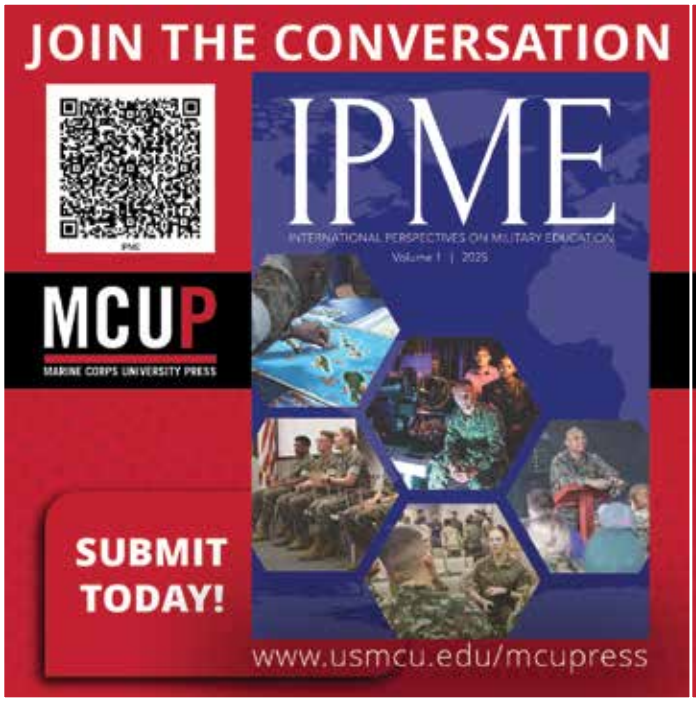
[41] Treaty of Ghent, 24 December 1814, Perfected Treaties, 1778–1945, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

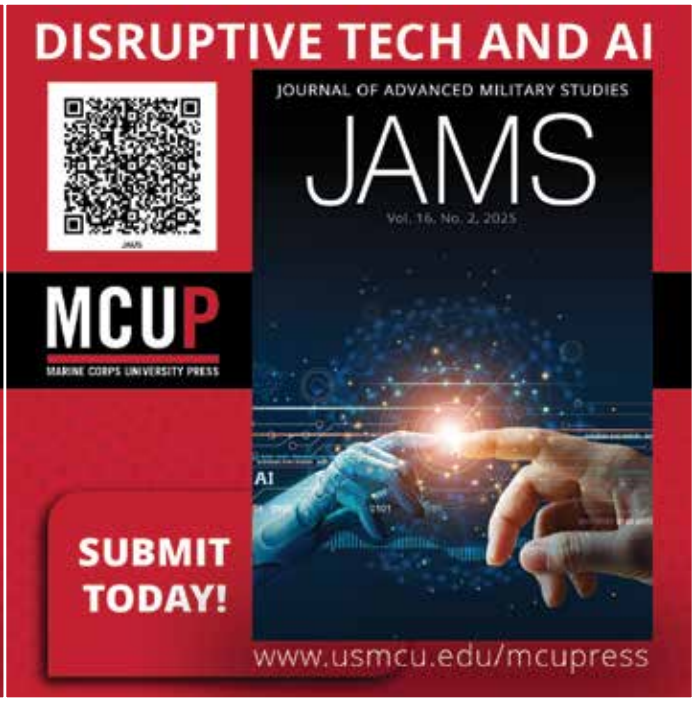
[42] Marburg, "Brass Button Making at the Scovill Enterprise, 1802–1852. Part II, The Varieties of Buttons," 159–74.

Conclusion

Something as simple as a button can possess a complex history that illuminates aspects of broader U.S. and Marine Corps history and heritage. This research finds that Aaron M. Peasley was responsible for producing the earliest confirmed Marine Corps uniform button emblem, which is still being used today in an updated style. For roughly 200 years, Peasley's contribution to the Marine Corps was unrecognized. His impact on the Marine Corps, though not one of doctrine or battles fought, still survives and his work centuries ago should be understood and credited in the twenty-first century.

•1775•





The Legacy of World War II Cryptologist Alva B. Lasswell

by Gregory J. Nedved

Abstract: The story of Alva B. Lasswell is becoming better known within the Marine Corps. The abridged version is that his cryptanalytic acumen greatly facilitated victory at Midway in June 1942 and the shootdown of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's aircraft in April 1943. The unabridged version, revealed in this article, shows that his cryptologic contributions were far greater than this. In fact, his contributions continue to affect Marine cryptology to this day, a remarkable feat when one considers that he left the field for good even before World War II ended. Indeed, his Marine Corps legacy has not only grown, it has expanded in ways he never would have anticipated.

Keywords: Alva B. Lasswell, Joseph J. Rochefort, Station Hypo, Battle of Midway, Yamamoto shootdown, Joseph Finnegan

On 4 November 2019, Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell was officially inducted into the National Security Agency's (NSA) Cryptologic Hall of Honor. Just a year earlier, on 15 November 2018, Lasswell Hall was officially dedicated as the home of the new Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command headquarters on NSA's East Campus in Fort Meade, Maryland.[1] It was not the first instance of the NSA recognizing Lasswell; the Crypto-Linguistic Association, the NSA's professional language association, has been bestowing the Lasswell Award to mid-career military language analysts since 2003.[2]

Yet, the 2018–19 honors finally recognized Lasswell as a true World War II superstar in the field of signals intelligence (SIGINT). Prior to this time, the successes of Lasswell's wartime unit, the Combat Intelligence Unit (a.k.a. HYPO), at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, were usually credited to Joseph J. Rochefort, the unit commander.[3] As the NSA noted in 2000 when it selected Rochefort for the Cryptologic Hall of Honor, he "provided singularly superb cryptologic support to the U.S. fleet during World War II, leading to victory in the war in the Pacific."[4] But the NSA determined

Gregory J. Nedved retired in 2024 from the National Security Agency, where he served as a historian at the Center for Cryptologic History since 2011. Prior to this, he spent much of his professional career working with the Chinese language in various capacities: language analyst, translator, instructor, etc. He is a two-time winner of NSA's Cryptologic Literature Award (2011, 2019) for China-related topics. https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4596-726X

https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2024100202

[1] Loren Blinde, "NSA Inducts Four Pioneers into the Cryptologic Hall of Honor," *Intelligence Community News*, 8 November 2019; Image: Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Visits MARFORCYBER, Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, 2 October 2019; and John Lasswell and James Lasswell, correspondence with author, 27 December 2023.

[2] CLA president, memo, "(U) The Crypto-Linguistic Association (CLA)," *SIDToday*, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, accessed 25 August 2023.

[3] Elliot Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War: The Odyssey of the Codebreaker Who Outwitted Yamamoto at Midway* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), ix, x, 99; and Tom Hunnicutt, *The SigInt Sniper: Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps* (Williford, AR: Hunnicutt and Hunnicutt Publishing, 2015), 10.

[4] "CAPT Joseph J. Rochefort, USN," NSA Historical Figures, Cryptologic History, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, accessed 25 August 2023.

that it was now time to highlight Lasswell's contributions to the unit's accomplishments.

Early Career

Lasswell was born on 3 January 1905 in Walpole, Illinois, to Charles S. Lasswell and Leanna Russell. The family relocated to Piggott, Arkansas, where he spent his early years. Although he attended schools in both Piggott and nearby Rector, Lasswell claimed that the majority of his educational training actually came from homeschooling by his father, a schoolteacher, lawyer, and farmer. In 1921, Lasswell moved to Oklahoma, where he helped manage stores for a few years.[5]

His next career move to the Marine Corps in 1925 changed his life and altered history, setting him on the path to cryptologic mastery in World War II. His first duty station right out of boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, was at the post exchange, where he became chief steward because of his bookkeeping and mathematical skills.[6] He said later that this was the best education he had ever received since he had to account for every penny when closing the books for the day. Such skills as this, requiring attention to detail, were essential foundations of Lasswell's future career in cryptology.[7] While at Parris Island, he also ran an officer preparatory course while taking the course himself. He did well enough in his first years as a Marine to make corporal (he was actually on the sergeant's list awaiting an opening). Next, he attended Officer Candidates School (OCS) and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1929. This presented some challenges, as he had not formally graduated from high school and was physically underweight by Marine Corps standards at the time of his OCS graduation.[8]

Courtesy of the Lasswell family, photo by National Security Agency
Col Alva Bryan Lasswell.

His early career as an officer provided some variety. He spent two years (1931–33) on board the USS *Arizona* (BB 39), later sunk at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. He had assignments at various Marine barracks, including Hampton Roads, Virginia; Bremerton, Washington; and Quantico, Virginia.[9] While at Quantico (1934–35), Lasswell excelled as a marksman and captained a national champion rifle team. He taught marksmanship (automatic weapons) to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents and received a letter of commendation from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover in 1935.[10] He also attended flight school in Pensacola, Florida, and graduated from the

[5] Tom Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero: Colonel Alva Bryan "Red" Lasswell (USMC), 1905–1988*, 2007, call no. D774.M5.H91 20071, object ID 2012.0101.0304, National Security Agency/Central Security Service National Cryptologic Museum, 1.
[6] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 1, enclosure 1.
[7] Hunnicutt, *The SigInt Sniper*, 35.
[8] *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, Lasswell holdings, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, 15–17; Alva B. Lasswell oral history, Lasswell, OH-1986-26, Lasswell holdings, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, 3–5, hereafter Lasswell oral history; and Hunnicutt, *Unsung Hero*, 1.
[9] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, enclosure 2; and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 27–28.
[10] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, enclosure 2, 07-A, 07-B; and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 28.

Photo by National Security Agency

Lasswell Hall, Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command, National Security Agency East Campus, Fort Meade, MD.

program, although he did not get his flight wings because there were too few openings for pilots at the time. It was one of the biggest disappointments of his military career.[11] In 1934, Lasswell was promoted to first lieutenant.[12]

Enter Cryptology

Lasswell's career move into cryptology was entirely serendipitous. He was selected for a special program to study foreign languages overseas. Lasswell had never aspired to study languages and had only inquired about the program on a whim, not expecting his commander to actually recommend him for it. Interestingly, Lasswell opined in an interview years later that he would have rejected an application such as his own had it ever needed his approval.[13]

In 1935, Lasswell went to Tokyo, Japan, to study Japanese for three years. Although he never developed an ear for the language and could not understand it well when spoken, he excelled at reading it. He be-

[11] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, enclosure 2; and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 27–28.
[12] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, enclosure 2.

[13] *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 29; and Lasswell oral history, 6.

lieved that he could read more Japanese than any of his colleagues. Fortunately, reading was the skill most needed when working on Japanese codes and ciphers in Hawaii. While stationed in Japan, he was promoted to captain.[14]

In 1938–39, he was assigned to Radio Security Station C in Cavite, Philippines, where he decrypted and translated Japanese naval messages, replacing Joseph Finnegan, his future colleague at HYPO. This was Lasswell's first SIGINT experience and his first exposure to the Imperial Japanese Navy messages that would be so identified with U.S. codebreaking success in the years to come. The Japanese messages he worked at Cavite, he felt, were easier to read than those he would later see at HYPO. Since he knew Japanese, he also served as a liaison for a Japanese training squadron then visiting the Philippines.[15]

At the request of Redfield "Rosey" Mason, Lasswell then deployed to Navy Radio Security Station A in Shanghai, China, in 1939–40. Mason, then an intelligence officer for the Asiatic Fleet, would later spar with Lasswell about Midway translations in 1942. At Station A, the target was Japanese diplomatic messages, the only time that Lasswell was exposed to their content. Lasswell also served as the Shanghai site's final officer-in-charge, since Station A was deactivated in 1940.[16]

Lasswell's time in Shanghai would be memorable by anyone's standards. Lasswell's military parent unit there was the 4th Marine Regiment. His first commander did not fully grasp the importance of communications security; he constantly referred to Lasswell at social events as his personal *black chamber*, a term generally understood to mean an organization that engages in secretive cryptologic work.[17] This situation, if nothing else, demonstrated to Lasswell that his new career field carried some anonymity risks. Beyond this, it suggested that his superiors did not always understand, if even appreciate, cryptology work. A misunderstood profession at the time, cryptology was not a field officers usually entered to advance their military careers. Certainly Lasswell, when joining the Marine Corps, never intended to enter the field. His cryptologic career, by choice, was short-lived and he never received the Distinguished Service Medal that was recommended for him.[18]

Lasswell next played a major role in an international incident, demonstrating the capabilities of a Marine Corps cryptologist. Colonel DeWitt Peck, the 4th Marine Regiment commander, learned in 1940 of a Japanese plot to seize the International Settlement in Shanghai by perfidy. Japan would create an incident and, as a pretext for restoring order, send its army into the settlement as an occupying force. To thwart the plot, Peck selected Lasswell to quietly round up the Japanese infiltrators, who were disguised as Chinese civilians. Given Lasswell's rank, language training, and marksmanship skills, it is little wonder that Peck chose him.[19]

According to Lasswell, Peck had learned of the Japanese plot from French intelligence. Historian E. E. Okins, however, provides a different version of the story, which credits U.S. cryptanalytic acumen for exposing the plot.[20] To quote Okins, "Thank God for our intercept and code breaking ability."[21] Okins suggests that Peck's action was the first use of tactical SIGINT by a Marine Corps commander. If U.S. cryptology

[14] Lasswell oral history, 6, 15; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, enclosure 2.

[15] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, enclosure 2; Lasswell oral history, 8–9; *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 36–37; and Tom Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History, Volume One (1927–1942)*, Lasswell holdings, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, 53.

[16] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 53–54; and Lasswell oral history, 9–10, 18.

[17] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, enclosure 08; Alva Bryan Lasswell, "Pearl Harbor Processing Center," *Cryptolog* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1986): 17; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968, interview by Benis M. Frank, Marine Corps Project, Oral History Archives, Columbia University Libraries, accessed 25 August 2023, https://dx.doi.org/10.7916/d8-ra9e-af88.

[18] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 3, 5, 9, 11; and John Keegan, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 192.

[19] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 83–84, 86; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.

[20] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 83–84; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.

[21] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 84.

was indeed responsible for uncovering the plot, then Lasswell would have figured prominently in it anyway since he was the Station A officer-in-charge and a Japanese language specialist.[22]

Lasswell and an unnamed enlisted Marine then took action, disarming 16 Japanese soldiers. In each case, the soldier went for his pistol but the two seized his arm and, using a bayonet, severed the lanyard holding his pistol—"the hardest thing we had to do," noted Lasswell. When the soldier then refused to go into the waiting truck as demanded, Lasswell and the accompanying Marine physically tossed him into the back. This was a successful operation with no loss of life but loss of face for Japan, which later apologized for the incident. Since a typical Marine cryptologic officer was not expected to perform such heroics, Lasswell may be seen as having raised the bar for what a Marine cryptologic officer could (or should) do in the line of duty.[23]

Interestingly, Lasswell shortly thereafter had to return to Japan as he was finally going home to the United States. He joined his wife, Betty, who had been coincidentally visiting Tokyo at the time. The foiled Japanese plot in the Shanghai International Settlement, including Lasswell's role in it, made newspapers around the world, especially in Japan, where he was referred to as a Japanese-speaking Marine and other things less kind. Fortunately, the Lasswells left Japan without incident. Surprisingly, the Marine Corps never directly commended Lasswell for his Japanese roundup actions.[24]

Making Wartime History

The Marine Corps recognized that language skills like Lasswell's were badly needed. His next assignment was in California, where he was briefly involved in recruiting individuals with Japanese-language skills. According to Lasswell, "In general the talent was not that good, but I did find some who justified further training."[25] Then Lasswell was assigned to run a Japanese-language program at the University of Hawaii. After his arrival in early 1941, he received sudden orders sending him instead to Pearl Harbor to work on Japanese naval radio traffic. The language program, as it turned out, failed to gain any traction, and the Marine Corps decided to send the students to learn Japanese in Boulder, Colorado.[26]

His place of duty for the next few years—and the place where he influenced history—has had an identity crisis. Earlier historians always referred to it as HYPO, but that, strictly speaking, was Navy Radio Security Station H located in Wahiawa, a town near Pearl Harbor. Most historians have settled on Lasswell's organization as the Combat Intelligence Unit. When Lasswell worked the famous Yamamoto message, it was being called Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific (FRUPAC). Its informal name (and undoubtedly indicative of its physical appearance and environment) was "the Dungeon." For simplicity and consistency purposes, this paper refers to the unit as HYPO, the name that Lasswell used for it.[27]

Lasswell's commanding officer at HYPO, Commander Joseph Rochefort, is now a well-known name in naval cryptologic history. A Japanese linguist with some prior cryptologic experience, Rochefort is sometimes credited by historians with doing the major cryptanalysis and translations of the Midway-related attack messages. This is not accurate, although he may have on occasion personally lent a hand or reviewed the most sensitive decrypts emanating from HYPO.[28] Instead, Rochefort's brilliance was as a manager, scoring high marks in that role from Lasswell. Rochefort essentially let his people, whose skills he trusted, do their work. Among his acknowledged achievements were the recruitment of idle members of the USS *California* (BB 44) band to run HYPO's IBM processing

[22] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 83–84, 86; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.
[23] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 86–87; Lasswell oral history, 10; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.
[24] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 87; Lasswell oral history, 8, 10–11; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.
[25] *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 37; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, enclosure 2.
[26] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2; Lasswell, "Pearl Harbor Processing Center," 17; and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 39, 41.
[27] Lasswell, oral history, 17; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, 4; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, ix, x, 99.
[28] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 5–6; "CAPT Joseph J. Rochefort, USN"; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 105.

machines and the sponsorship, if not the authorship, of the famous scheme to learn the true location of a planned Japanese attack (discussed later). In particular, Rochefort was the kind of manager who recognized talent when he saw it.[29]

Lasswell appeared already to be a known quantity among the Navy's cryptologic intelligentsia. According to Lasswell, an old colleague from Cavite, Captain Jack S. Holtwick, met him when he arrived in Hawaii and updated him, stating that HYPO had persuaded the secretary of the Navy to approve the change to Lasswell's assignment.[30] Most likely, Rochefort requested the change, a prescient decision as a manager, given later developments. Rochefort knew Lasswell only by reputation at that point. Intriguingly, Lasswell arrived at HYPO shortly before Rochefort did. U.S. Navy commander Laurance F. Safford, head of OP-20-G (Code and Signals) in Washington, had promised Rochefort the very best language analysts out there if he agreed to lead HYPO.[31] In assigning Lasswell to Rochefort, Safford kept his word.

Indeed, HYPO was becoming the magnet for Japan-trained cryptanalysts such as Joseph Finnegan, Lasswell's predecessor at Cavite, who would be assigned to HYPO after the Pearl Harbor attack. Lasswell seemed fated to go to HYPO and work for Rochefort, who put him in charge of overall language analysis work.[32] Following the Pearl Harbor attack, Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. sought a HYPO linguist to serve on board the USS *Enterprise* (CV 6). Since this meant a likely combat situation for the *Enterprise*, Rochefort had to pick a qualified person. Interestingly, the linguist he chose was the other HYPO Marine, Captain Bankson Holcomb Jr., also Japan-educated, who had just arrived at the post.[33] Lasswell was too important to Rochefort's mission to leave, even though he was more qualified than Holcomb.[34] It seems that Lasswell would have jumped at the opportunity had he been offered the assignment. Right around the time of the Holcomb deployment, Lasswell requested that a more experienced colleague, Navy captain Ranson Fullinwider, replace him as one of Rochefort's cryptologic team leaders. Lasswell recalled telling Rochefort, "You've got an officer much senior to me. . . . Let him take over, let me go to war." Rochefort said, "No Way." He was determined to keep Lasswell at HYPO. A few others, including Fullinwider, would eventually be deployed afloat but never Lasswell.[35]

HYPO, finding its way under Rochefort, was not yet able to provide any indications that the Japanese would attack Pearl Harbor. JN-25, the Japanese Navy's general-purpose code (and the best source for preventing the attack), was still mostly unreadable because of a shortage of Navy personnel assigned to tackle it. Moreover, the Japanese had gone to radio silence in preparation for the attack.[36] Lasswell recalled personally canvassing the body of one of the dead Japanese pilots (his plane was downed outside of HYPO) and concluding, from the pilot's cold-weather attire, that the attack force had struck from the north. At the time, most U.S. naval strategists were convinced that the Japanese attacked from the south. This was not the last time that Lasswell's analysis was different from others and proven correct.[37]

Midway Role

Although the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor was a victory for Japan, the U.S. aircraft carriers that were the planned targets remained the primary obstacle for Japanese victory in the Pacific, since they were not at Pearl Harbor as the Japanese had hoped. In an attempt to bring the United States to the negotiating

[29] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 5–6; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 227–30, 334–36.
[30] Lasswell oral history; 11, and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 39.
[31] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2–3; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 38, 101, 213.
[32] *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 41; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2–3, 6; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 200.
[33] Holcomb's decryptions helped Halsey launch surprise attacks in the northern Marshall Islands in February 1942.
[34] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 94, 239.
[35] Lasswell oral history, 26; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 242–43.
[36] Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 194; and Frederick D. Parker, *A Priceless Advantage: U.S. Navy Communications Intelligence and the Battles of Coral Sea, Midway, and the Aleutians*, series 4, *World War II*, vol. 5 (Fort George G. Meade, MD: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 2017), 16.
[37] Lasswell oral history, 12–13; Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 1, 104; and Lasswell, "Pearl Harbor Processing Center," 17.

table and ultimately win the war, Japan concocted a scheme to draw out those carriers around the island of Midway, a U.S. possession in the Pacific. It was at Midway that Japan planned to destroy the carriers in a decisive battle.[38]

At this time, the U.S. Navy was getting Japanese SIGINT from a few sources, including direction finding (DF) and traffic analysis (T/A). DF refers to the usage of radio receivers and directional antennas to find the source of a signal. Antennas pinpoint the direction from which the signal is strongest. With several DF stations providing directions and positions, a control station can then fix the position of a ship. The Navy during World War II had a growing number of mid-Pacific high frequency (HF) DF stations.[39] T/A refers to the study of external features of target communications. It examines all aspects of communications transmissions (excluding code or cipher message content), including radio frequency usage, callsigns, transmission schedules, transmitter locations, message traffic routing and volume, radio operator chatter, and manual Morse operator idiosyncrasies.[40] Simply stated, it is the information contained on the envelope rather than the content of the letter inside.[41]

Then there is codebreaking, such as cryptanalysis, which is often slow and tedious. Fortunately for the United States, its cryptanalysts had made enough headway on JN-25 to discern some of Japan's future naval plans. In mid-May, cryptanalysts struck gold. They gleaned from JN-25 decrypts Japan's operational plans for the Midway attack. Rochefort's cryptanalytic team at HYPO included Navy lieutenant commanders Thomas H. Dyer and Wesley A. Wright. JN-25 intercept was encrypted, meaning that the ciphers had to be stripped off before code recovery was even possible. Code recovery was the task of Lasswell and Joe Finnegan, who, as noted, had been Lasswell's predecessor at Cavite.[42]

JN-25 traffic was codebook-based, with the codebook providing numerical equivalents for Japanese military terms. As an example, 24396 equated to U.S. Navy (*Beikoku Kaigun* in Romaji, the Romanized Japanese script). Adding a cipher (i.e., encryption) meant that additional numbers, chosen at random, were added to the military terms. In this example, 13402, randomly chosen, would be added to 24396, and the new number, 37798, would be transmitted to represent U.S Navy. The first step in decryption was to strip off the added 13402. Lasswell, without the benefit of the codebook, would then have to determine that 24396 meant U.S. Navy.[43]

Lasswell was especially complimentary of Wright:

> I give him credit for getting us to a stage where we could work on the codes. The Japanese put the most complicated cipher on top of their codes . . . and I'm sure that he [Wright] was the first one to get into it. I don't know what you know about this type of code (JN-25), but Finnegan and I had both worked with an actual code, which gave us an advantage.[44]

The last step was the translation into English from Japanese. In addition to being cryptanalysts, Lasswell and Finnegan were also Rochefort's two primary translators. Their ability to perform both cryptanalysis and translation made them especially valuable at HYPO. Lasswell was the star translator since he had a better command of the Japanese written language, while Finnegan had the better ear. Lasswell also ran the language section. He explained, "On Joe's arrival, I reorganized the section on a two-watch basis. I took twenty-four hours and gave Joe the other twenty-four hour period with the other personnel of the section

[38] "Battle of Midway," World War II, History.com, accessed 7 December 2023; and "Pearl Harbor and the Japanese Expansion, to July 1942," Axis Initiative and Allied Reaction, World War II, Britannica, accessed 7 December 2023.

[39] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 115; and "Early Direction Finding: From World War I through the Cold War," StationHYPO.com, accessed 29 May 2024.

[40] Such an idiosyncrasy was a "fist" (i.e., the operator's style of transmitting manual Morse).

[41] Donald A. Borrmann et al., *The History of Traffic Analysis: World War I–Vietnam* (Fort George C. Meade, MD: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 2013), 3.

[42] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 307–8; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 6–7; and Hunnicutt, *The SigInt Sniper*, 21.

[43] John Lasswell and James Lasswell, interview with author, 15 May 2024.

[44] Lasswell oral history, 15.

divided between Joe and myself." Finnegan's importance was such that Lasswell called him "my right arm."[45]

On 20 May 1942, Lasswell began work on what, for all practical purposes, was the Japanese Navy's operations order for the attack on Midway. Rochefort biographer Elliot Carlson has questioned whether Lasswell worked on the actual order, arguing that it was instead a part, albeit an important part, of that order. Even so, there is no disputing that Lasswell translated critical Japanese Midway operational messages during this time, something that Carlson acknowledged: "Even if not the fugitive battle order, the messages contained information that amount to the same thing."[46] Indeed, as HYPO's chief translator, Lasswell would most definitely have approved the final wording on any translated messages related to Midway. His own recollection was that he recognized at once the importance of a certain Japanese message by its address group and spent a whole day working on it.[47]

In the end, it was Lasswell's translation work that mattered. His translations of Japan's Midway attack plan were forwarded for comparison to NEGAT. The cover name for OP-20-G (Code and Signals) at the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, DC, NEGAT was essentially HYPO's equivalent. Lasswell's counterpart there, the aforementioned Redfield Mason, mostly agreed with Lasswell's translations but disagreed that Midway was the actual target.[48]

Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the new commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, had learned to trust the work of Rochefort and his team. Rochefort's SIGINT had been reliable during the Battle of the Coral Sea (7–8 May 1942), the first time in the war that a Japanese advance had been thwarted.[49] Vital to creating this trust was the role played by Commander Edwin T. Layton, the intelligence officer for the Pacific Fleet.[50] Layton also had studied Japanese and had a close working relationship with Rochefort. He was essentially the liaison between Rochefort and Nimitz. In this capacity, he could articulate to Nimitz what HYPO was learning about Japanese intentions. Even before Midway, Layton had advocated effectively on Rochefort's behalf, persuading a reluctant Nimitz to permit the USS *California* band to run HYPO's IBM processing machines.[51]

Trust can only go so far, however. Given his position and what was at stake for the United States, Nimitz had no margin for error. He had to have accurate intelligence for planning purposes. Therefore, he asked Lasswell how certain he was that the target was Midway. Lasswell stated that he was 100 percent certain.[52] While Lasswell's assurances were probably enough for Nimitz, all would agree that it was still better to remove any doubts about the ultimate Japanese military target. U.S. intelligence analysts had concluded from JN-25 traffic that the target of the Japanese attack was a location known simply in U.S. military phonetics as Affirm Fox (now Alpha Foxtrot), or AF. HYPO was insistent that AF was Midway.[53]

To verify Lasswell's translations and silence skeptics that the target was Midway, HYPO resorted to one of the oldest cryptologic tricks in the book—employment of the fake message. Although Rochefort may not have been the one who conceived of this scheme, he (along with Layton) deserves credit for their role in persuading Nimitz to implement it.[54] At the request

[45] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2–3; *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 42; Lasswell oral history, 15; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.
[46] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 344. According to Carlson, the actual order was never recovered by HYPO or by any U.S. collection entity.
[47] Lasswell, "Pearl Harbor Processing Center," 17; Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 327; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2.
[48] Lasswell oral history, 18; Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 540; and *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 42.
[49] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 292–93; and Parker, *A Priceless Advantage*, 26–27.
[50] Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 202.
[51] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 50–51, 230; and E. B. Potter, "Admiral Nimitz and the Battle of Midway," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 102, no. 7 (July 1976).
[52] Lasswell, OH-1986-26, 18; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7.
[53] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 326, 336; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7; Peter C. Oleson, "The Breaking of JN-25 and its Impact in the War against Japan," *Intelligencer* 26, no. 2 (Winter-Spring 2021): 8; and "Military Alphabet," TVTropes.org, accessed 11 December 2023.
[54] HYPO ship plotter Jasper Holmes and Joe Finnegan are among those credited with originating it.

of HYPO, Midway command transmitted a message stating that Midway Island needed freshwater because of a water distillation problem there. The message was deliberately transmitted unencoded in channels accessible to the Japanese.[55] As HYPO had hoped, the Japanese intercepted said message and consequently indicated in their own JN-25 message that the location that needed freshwater was indeed AF. Lasswell performed cryptanalysis and translation for this message too.[56] The Navy now had its smoking gun, solid proof confirming that AF was Midway. HYPO had been correct in its analysis.

The Battle of Midway, most historians agree, was the turning point of the war in the Pacific. The U.S. Navy destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers while only losing one of its own. Japan, which could not easily replace four carriers, would never again gain the strategic offensive and was forced to play defense for the rest of the war.[57] The impact of this battle is better understood if one considers the outcome of a U.S. loss at Midway: the U.S. fleet would have been weakened, if not destroyed. Although the west coast of North America was never a military objective per se of the Japanese, a Midway defeat would have increased its vulnerability.

NSA historian Frederick D. Parker, in his 1993 study of the Battles of Coral Sea, Midway, and the Aleutians, stated that its own SIGINT gave the Navy "a priceless advantage."[58] Indeed, cryptanalysis provided the locations and dates for the Midway attack, while T/A played the primary role in determining what Japanese fleet units would participate.[59] The accurate analysis provided by Rochefort's HYPO—and Lasswell's role in this—made a critical difference by any yardstick used. Lasswell translated important messages that provided Japanese specifics about the plan, writing later, "I was directly responsible for our knowing ahead of time of that attack."[60] He personally assured Nimitz that the target was Midway. Lasswell cited Midway as his greatest contribution to the nation and to the Marine Corps.[61]

It is important to emphasize, however, that codebreaking does not win wars, or even battles. This is a reality often forgotten by codebreakers themselves. History is replete with examples of intelligence being misused or misapplied, even intelligence coups such as this one. Excellent intelligence—such as that provided by HYPO and Lasswell—does not necessarily equate to victory. The battle, in the final analysis, still had to be won by the Navy. Those familiar with the Midway battle even know that the United States did not fare particularly well in the beginning, its aircraft failing to inflict any real damage even when it directly saw the enemy vessels.[62] In fact, the well-regarded historian John Keegan, in *Intelligence in War*, wrote that the United States "nearly lost" the battle.[63]

Targeting Yamamoto and Thwarting Operation A-Go

Lasswell's second major achievement led to the shootdown of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, the great Japanese naval strategist and mastermind of the Pearl Harbor attack. Lasswell decrypted and translated a JN-25 message providing detailed information about Yamamoto's planned inspection tour of the Japanese-held Bougainville area from his headquarters at Rabaul (located in what is now East New Britain, Papua New Guinea). The details included gems such as the exact time of Yamamoto's arrival. Lasswell's translation was forwarded to Nimitz, who immediately planned the attack on Yamamoto's aircraft. As a result, U.S. Army Air Corps pilots were able to shoot down Yamamoto's plane on 18 April 1943.[64]

Lasswell's work on Yamamoto's travel agenda essentially defined him, placing him among the greats in

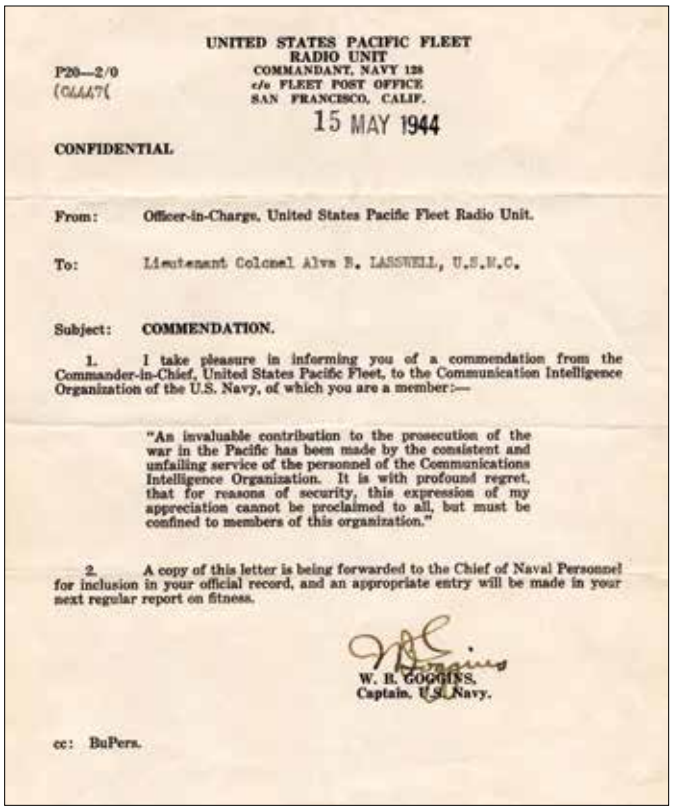
[55] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 333–35; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7.
[56] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 336; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7; and Lasswell oral history, 18–19.
[57] "Battle of Midway."
[58] Parker, *A Priceless Advantage*, v.
[59] Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 202–4, 218.
[60] Lasswell oral history, 38.
[61] Lasswell oral history, 38.
[62] "Battle of Midway."
[63] Keegan, *Intelligence in War*, 220.
[64] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7–8; and John Curatola, "Operation Vengeance: The Killing of Isoroku Yamamoto," National World War II Museum, 26 April 2023.

U.S. cryptologic history since it was his achievement. Although he had been the de facto primary HYPO translator since his arrival, the shadow of Rochefort had obscured his Midway achievement. Rochefort though had left HYPO in late 1942.[65] Lasswell at the time clearly understood the significance of the Yamamoto message, shouting out, "We've hit the jackpot!" He performed both code recovery and translation of the message.[66]

The message attracted a lot of attention since NEGAT and Fleet Radio Unit, Melbourne (FRUMEL) saw it, as well. It was Lasswell's translation, though, that was sent to Nimitz. As naval historian Roger Pineau reported, Lasswell worked on the translation all night and on completion, he gave it to Layton, who told Nimitz that Yamamoto was irreplaceable to Japan. Pineau later compared the actual message (as given to him by the Japanese) with Lasswell's translation and discovered that Lasswell had been 100 percent accurate in his translation.[67]

If Lasswell's association with the Midway and Yamamoto events was not impressive enough, there was even more to note, particularly his role in thwarting Operation A-Go. Operation A-Go called for concentrating the Japanese fleet to ambush the U.S. fleet in a decisive battle in 1944. The plan included establishing a Japanese blocking line of seven submarines northeast of the Admiralty Islands and New Guinea, the expected path of American carriers. The submarines, in addition to providing early warning, were also expected to sink U.S. ships.[68]

Lasswell believed it to be a Japanese attempt to assassinate U.S. Army general Douglas MacArthur, commander of Allied forces in the Southwest Pacific, as he was leaving Australia for the Philippine Islands in October 1944. This was Japan's supposed plan to enact revenge on the United States for the Yamamoto assassination. At least five of those submarines were hunted down by the USS *England* (DE 635).[69] Lasswell later recalled, "I identified each of the locations in this [message] and put it on the circuit. Now, I understand, although I wasn't in a position to follow through but I understand that our own submarine people went



UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
RADIO UNIT
COMMANDANT, NAVY 128
c/o FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

P20—2/0
(04447)

15 MAY 1944

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Officer-in-Charge, United States Pacific Fleet Radio Unit.

To: Lieutenant Colonel Alva B. LASSWELL, U.S.M.C.

Subject: COMMENDATION.

1. I take pleasure in informing you of a commendation from the Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, to the Communication Intelligence Organization of the U.S. Navy, of which you are a member:—

"An invaluable contribution to the prosecution of the war in the Pacific has been made by the consistent and unfailing service of the personnel of the Communications Intelligence Organization. It is with profound regret, that for reasons of security, this expression of my appreciation cannot be proclaimed to all, but must be confined to members of this organization."

2. A copy of this letter is being forwarded to the Chief of Naval Personnel for inclusion in your official record, and an appropriate entry will be made in your next regular report on fitness.

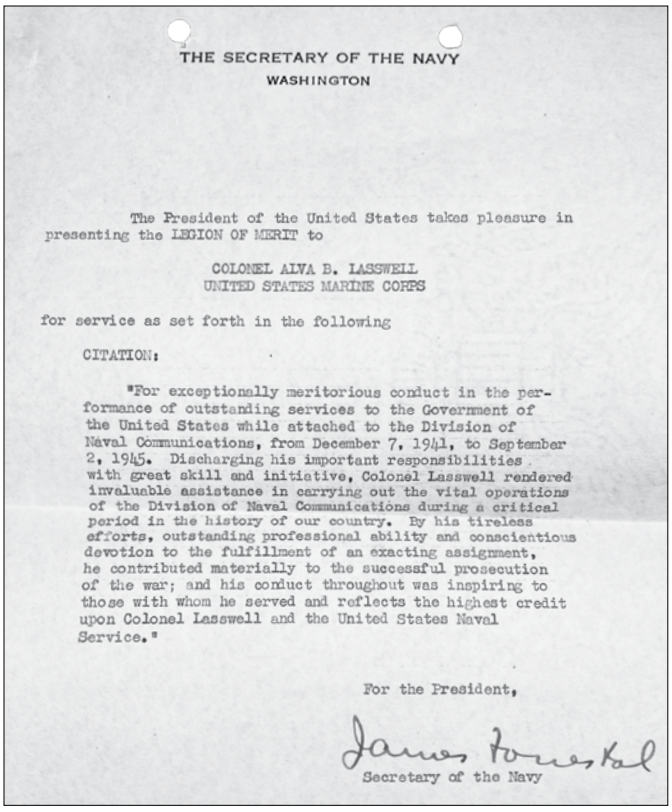
W. B. GOGGINS,
Captain, U.S. Navy.

cc: BuPers.

Photo by National Security Agency, call no. VF 175-012, object ID 2022.0101.0291

This typed letter, stamped 15 May 1944, commends Col Alva B. Lasswell and the Communication Intelligence Organization of the U.S. Navy. It states: "1. I take pleasure in informing you of a commendation from Commander-in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet, to the Communication Intelligence Organization of the U.S. Navy, of which you are a member: 'An invaluable contribution to the prosecution of the war in the Pacific has been made by the consistent and unfailing service of the personnel of the Communications Intelligence Organization. It is with profound regret, that for reasons of security, this expression of my appreciation cannot be proclaimed to all, but must be confined to members of this organization.' 2. A copy of this letter is being forwarded to the Chief of Naval Personnel for inclusion in your official record, and an appropriate entry will be made in your next regular report on fitness."
W. B. Goggins
Captain, U.S. Navy

[65] William B. Goggins replaced Rochefort, however, he was not a language analyst. Lasswell became the de facto senior site language analyst.
[66] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 2, 407, 417; Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 7; and Roger Pineau correspondence package to Lasswell, 17 June 1988, Lasswell holdings, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, 3, 6.
[67] Roger Pineau correspondence to Lasswell, 3–6.
[68] Michael Peck, "Meet the USS England: The Warship that Sent the Most Submarines to the Ocean Floor," *National Interest* (blog), accessed 2 June 2024.
[69] Lasswell oral history, 22; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 8–9.



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the LEGION OF MERIT to

COLONEL ALVA B. LASSWELL
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States while attached to the Division of Naval Communications, from December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945. Discharging his important responsibilities with great skill and initiative, Colonel Lasswell rendered invaluable assistance in carrying out the vital operations of the Division of Naval Communications during a critical period in the history of our country. By his tireless efforts, outstanding professional ability and conscientious devotion to the fulfillment of an exacting assignment, he contributed materially to the successful prosecution of the war; and his conduct throughout was inspiring to those with whom he served and reflects the highest credit upon Colonel Lasswell and the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

James Forrestal

Secretary of the Navy

Photo by National Security Agency, call no. VF 175-012, object ID 2022.0101.0294

This typed letter presented the Legion of Merit to Col Alva B. Lasswell on 25 March 1946. The Legion of Merit is awarded for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements. The letter states: "The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Legion of Merit to Colonel Alva B. Lasswell United States Marine Corps for service set forth in the following. Citation: 'For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services to the Government of the United States while attached to the Division of Naval Communications, from December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945. Discharging his important responsibilities with great skill and initiative, Colonel Lasswell rendered invaluable assistance in carrying out the vital operations of the Division of Naval Communications during a critical period in history of our country. By his tireless efforts, outstanding professional ability and conscientious devotion to the fulfillment of an exacting assignment, he contributed materially to the successful prosecution of the war; and his conduct throughout was inspiring to those with whom he served and reflects the highest credit upon Colonel Lasswell and the United States Naval Service'."
For the President,
James Forrestal,
Secretary of the Navy

in and knocked off all of them as a result of that message."[70] Lasswell considered this achievement to be significant in terms of inter-Service cooperation.[71]

Moreover, a September 1943 document recommending Lasswell's promotion to full colonel specifically cited his cryptologic accomplishments at Coral Sea and the Solomon Islands.[72] The former, as noted, is the battle that immediately preceded Midway while the Solomon Islands is probably a reference to the battle for Guadalcanal, fought August 1942–February 1943.[73] This is undoubtedly an acknowledgement of his role as a senior translator at HYPO, which actively supported both operations. Indeed, there was now added value to his contributions; with Rochefort's October 1942 departure from HYPO at the beginning of the Guadalcanal campaign, Lasswell was now undisputedly the final stop for any HYPO translation.[74]

One of Lasswell's wartime colleagues remembered that "Lasswell approached cryptanalysis like a chest player maneuvering relentlessly to untangle his problem. His desk was usually clear of everything but his current puzzle. He worked sitting upright at his desk, wearing a carefully pressed Marine Corps uniform of the day, his sole deviation being a green eyeshade for protection against the hours under fluorescent lights."[75] Another colleague described him as "our steady, dependable, long-enduring, right-as-rain Lou Gehrig type of person."[76]

Despite a recommendation by Admiral Nimitz following Midway, Lasswell never received the Distinguished Service Medal for his services in Hawaii.[77] Even the better-known Rochefort, also recommended by Nimitz, had to wait until the mid-1980s for his

[70] Lasswell oral history, 22.
[71] Lasswell oral history, 22.
[72] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, enclosure 5. Lasswell would not take credit for the Coral Sea campaign, declaring, "I had no part of that." Historian Elliot Carlson also acknowledged Lasswell for his Coral Sea work. Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 279.
[73] "The Solomons Campaign: Guadalcanal, August 1942–February 1943," Naval Heritage and History Command, accessed 3 June 2024; and Parker, *A Priceless Advantage*, 26–27.
[74] Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 2, 402, 417.
[75] Undoubtedly *chess player* should be the intended meaning here. Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 8.
[76] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 3.
[77] Lasswell did receive the Legion of Merit Award in 1946, along with several of his HYPO colleagues.

medal. The usual reason cited for the omission (and delay) was World War II-era Navy politics, in this case a lack of recognition by Navy headquarters, specifically by Admiral Ernest F. King, the Navy's commander in chief, U.S. Fleet, of the critical role played by HYPO during the war. Even a recommendation by Nimitz did not always equate to automatic approval, apparently.[78]

There were also sad moments for Lasswell. He acknowledged that his cryptanalysis and translations undoubtedly led to the deaths of Allied prisoners of war (POWs). His work facilitated the targeting of Japanese transport vessels, particularly surface ships or submarines. While the Navy sought to avoid attacking vessels carrying POWs, it could not always determine for certain which vessels were not transporting them. A colleague of Lasswell's from his study in Japan, Francis Jordan, was among the unfortunates who perished this way.[79]

Aloha Also Means *Goodbye*

Early in the war, Lasswell was promoted to major (when he was working on the Midway messages) and then to lieutenant colonel. Yet, his cryptologic career in Hawaii ended before the war did. In October 1944, he was sent to NEGAT in Washington, DC, where he spent the rest of the war. He had served there briefly for two to three weeks during an officer exchange in 1943, in which Mason replaced him at HYPO while he replaced Mason at NEGAT.[80] It was at NEGAT where he achieved his final rank of full colonel in 1945.[81]

After this, he returned to Marine Corps units, holding a number of positions. For about a year, he was the officer-in-charge of the Marine Corps Separation Center at Bainbridge, Maryland. Then he went to China, where he briefly served as the unit commander of the 1st Marine Division in Tianjin, the first time that a colonel ever commanded a Marine Corps division.[82] After another stop, this time as the commanding officer of the 7th Marine Regiment at Camp Pendleton, California, Lasswell returned to Japan, where he served as the commanding officer of the Marine Barracks at Yokosuka. After a year in school and another job at Marine Headquarters, he went to Korea, although the Korean War (1950–53) was over by the time he arrived. His first job in Korea was as a supply depot commanding officer.[83]

Lasswell's second job there, as an advisor to Major General Shin Hyun-joon, the commanding general of the Korean Marine Brigade, is memorable because of his involvement in an international incident. Lasswell opined that his use of Japanese at a banquet featuring South Korean president Syngman Rhee may have resulted in the banning of the Japanese language within South Korea by Rhee (Japan had colonized Korea, 1910–45). Rhee apparently overheard Lasswell talking in Japanese with Mrs. Shem at the banquet table—as she did not know any English, she spoke to him in Japanese. This was the only way they could communicate, but it was deeply upsetting to Rhee.[84] Finally, Lasswell became the chief of staff of the Marine Corps Reserve Depot in San Diego, California, his last Marine Corps assignment. In retirement, he worked in real estate and banking in southern California for several years before passing away in 1988.[85]

Lasswell's Legacy

One might wonder why someone with such a distinguished cryptologic career would not go on to directly shape future Marine Corps and U.S. cryptology. Even

[78] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 9–10, enclosure 12, 16; Lasswell oral history, 19, 23, 27–28; and Carlson, *Joe Rochefort's War*, 2, 5, 392–93, 442–45.

[79] "Class of 1929," U.S. Naval Academy Virtual Memorial Hall, accessed 20 December 2023; Lasswell, OH-1986-26, 33–34; and "The Japanese 'Hell Ships' of World War II," Naval History and Heritage Command, accessed 89 January 2024.

[80] According to John Prados, Lasswell was sent to NEGAT to rest but ended up as Mason's replacement.

[81] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 9, 10, enclosure 2; *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 43; John Prados, *Combined Fleet Decoded: The Secret History of American Intelligence and the Japanese Navy in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1995), 308; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.

[82] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 9, 10, enclosure 2; and Lasswell oral history, 36, 39.

[83] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, enclosure 2; and Lasswell oral history, 40.

[84] *Memoirs of Colonel Alva Bryan Lasswell, United States Marine Corps, Retired*, 48; and Lasswell oral history, 40–41.

[85] Lasswell oral history, 41; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 10, enclosure 2.

when he retired, he did not seek employment with the NSA or any other intelligence agency. He had never intended to be a cryptologic officer; it came about because he volunteered for language training in Japan. Language training equated to cryptologic work, which he took on as any good Marine would. He consistently sought to return to the regular Marine Corps and assigned combat duty. He even tried to leave HYPO in search of sea duty.[86]

One of the biggest ironies in Lasswell's story is that his background as a cryptologic officer effectively prevented him from ever getting a combat command, even when there was no war taking place. His knowledge of codes and ciphers disqualified him from serving in combat command, where there was a potential risk of capture and torture by an enemy eager for such information. This lack of combat experience apparently prevented him from becoming a general officer. He was passed over numerous times for brigadier general.[87]

The first Marine Corps cryptologic units, Radio Intelligence Platoons, were activated in 1943, with four of the seven platoons participating directly in amphibious assaults in the Pacific. They were all deactivated right after the war. With the war over, the Marine Corps saw no reason for their existence. They had been under Navy functional control anyway, meaning that Navy cryptologic needs took priority. Lasswell, as noted, had no involvement with these units, and it is unreasonable to argue that he, even with his clear understanding of the importance of cryptology, would have prevented their deactivation after the war.[88]

Essentially, the Marine Corps would have to reorganize its cryptologic units, but this would take some time. There were no Marine Corps SIGINT units involved in the Korean War, although one was available at Camp Pendleton, California—but it was not considered combat ready. A Marine Corps study of its Korean War experience recommended enhancement of tactical SIGINT capabilities. This was done in the years following the war. These units were reactivated at the battalion level just in time for the Vietnam War (1965–73).[89]

In fact, many military cryptologic activities and organizations connected to Lasswell changed drastically in the years that followed or even disappeared, never to return. Currently, military cryptologic work is primarily the function of enlisted personnel, with officer oversight. Lasswell performed more cryptology than he would ever be expected to perform today. The most telling example of this change involved HYPO. In today's military, HYPO—with its core of officer cryptologists—would not look the same. The Services, through the Central Security Service (the military component of NSA) would perform this function. The enlisted personnel, with officer supervision, would do the heavy cryptologic lifting. Nor would it be an entirely military show, with civilians from NSA, for example, participating.[90]

Another related change is that military officers do not usually learn languages for strictly cryptologic reasons. The job of a language officer has changed over time. A language officer in Lasswell's day might go to an embassy or serve in liaison posts, such as performing some function where speaking in the target language is necessary—but they might also perform cryptology. The language officer of today, often as foreign affairs officers, would primarily do the former tasks.[91]

Lasswell had a profound effect on Marine Corps cryptology in one major way, the ramifications of which should continue indefinitely: he was both a linguist and a cryptanalyst, a powerful combination indeed.

As has been shown, Lasswell was able to demonstrate just how powerful such a combination could be by his cryptologic accomplishments in the Mid-

[86] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2–3, 5; and Lasswell oral history, 14–26.
[87] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 9–10, enclosures 2 and 15; and Lasswell oral history, 35.
[88] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History* 1, 3–5, 52, 97.
[89] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 3, 97; and David A. Hatch and Robert Louis Benson, *The Korean War: The SIGINT Background*, series 5, vol. 3 (Fort George C. Meade, MD: National Security Agency/Central Security Service, 2000).
[90] "Central Security Service (CSS)," National Security Agency/Central Security Service, accessed 14 February 2023.
[91] Lasswell oral history, 25, 31–32; and Reminiscences of Alva B. Lasswell 1968.

way, Yamamoto, and Operation A-Go episodes—even by his role in preventing the Japanese seizure of the Shanghai International Settlement in 1940.[92] Since World War II cryptosystems were often language-based, one needed both a language analyst (i.e., a linguist) and a cryptanalyst (i.e., a codebreaker) to attack them. Not all linguists were codebreakers and vice-versa. Someone such as Lasswell who could perform both effectively was a rarity. Even the precomputer processing machines of the day—the electromechanical cryptanalytic bombe used to counter the German Enigma machine—did not eliminate the need for linguists and codebreakers.[93]

Lasswell's greatest legacy to cryptology—not just to the Marine Corps—is that he was one of the first to institutionalize the language-cryptanalyst skillset. While forecasting the future is always risky, it still seems certain that this skillset will be needed indefinitely. One may argue that today's high-powered computers and the advent of artificial intelligence have made the linguist-cryptanalyst combination antiquated. However, military cryptologic organizations continue to seek language-qualified personnel and are willing to train them as cryptanalysts. As long as language-based cryptosystems exist, there will be a need for such a skillset. In this age of cryptologic revolution, Lasswell's legacy lives on.

Lasswell was hardly the first to possess such a cryptologic skillset; both Joseph Rochefort and Joseph Finnegan could make the same claim.[94] Lasswell was not even the first Marine so cryptologically endowed. Lasswell, however, was clearly the first Marine to enjoy this much success as a combined linguist and cryptanalyst. Indeed, he epitomized, even redefined, what a Marine Corps cryptologist can and even should do. A cryptologist could no longer be just a codemaker or just a codebreaker: the more versatile the cryptologist the better. Within the cryptologic language discipline, versatility has caught on. Today, the NSA does not employ linguists—it employs language analysts (i.e., those who do more than just translate).[95] Language analysts apply the analysis as well as translate. Lasswell was one of the first language analysts by 2024 standards.

The NSA's own Crypto-Linguistic Association (CLA) formally recognized the need for Lasswell's special skillset in 2003 when it created the Colonel Alva B. Lasswell Award, intended for mid-career military language analysts. The criteria for selection admittedly go well beyond anything Lasswell could have hoped to accomplish. For example, the computer category would never have existed in Lasswell's time. Nonetheless, other award criteria—production, transcription, translation, analysis—are 100 percent Lasswell skillsets. This is what the modern language analyst is supposed to accomplish. The CLA's Lasswell Award, in addition to recognizing Lasswell's past accomplishments, also ensure that his skillset will be perpetuated.[96]

The Marine Corps, as noted, had to reinvent itself cryptologically after the war and without any direct participation in the process by Lasswell. Fortunately, his experiences and successes clearly created a legacy, in that the Marine Corps would continue to recruit and train language cryptanalysts. For example, General Alfred M. Gray, the father of the modern Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion, was also a language cryptanalyst. Both men are members of the NSA Hall of Honor (Gray was in the class of 2008).[97]

Furthermore, Lasswell serves as a reminder that a military cryptologist is first and foremost a member of their respective Service. Lasswell would be the first

[92] Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 83–87; and Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2, 6–9.
[93] Jennifer Wilcox, *Solving the Enigma: History of the Cryptanalytic Bombe* (Fort George C. Meade, MD: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, 2006), 21, 24, 40.
[94] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 6; and "CAPT Joseph J. Rochefort, USN."
[95] "Career Fields," National Security Agency, accessed 25 August 2023.
[96] "Career Fields," National Security Agency; and "A Brief Description of the Four Language Analysis Awards at National Security Agency (NSA), 2008" (PDF), GovernmentAttic.org, accessed 21 February 2023.
[97] Loren Blinde, "NSA Inducts Four Pioneers into the Cryptologic Hall of Honor," *Intelligence Community News*, 8 November 2019; "General Alfred M. Gray, USMC (Ret), Chairman," Board of Regents, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, accessed 27 February 2023; "General Alfred M. Gray, USMC: 2008 Hall of Honor Inductee," NSA Historical Figures, National Security Agency/Central Security Service, accessed 25 August 2023; Scott Laidig, *Al Gray, Marine: The Early Years, 1950–1967*, vol. 1 (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute Press, 2013), 366–67; and Hunnicutt, *United States Marine Corps Cryptologic History*, 3, 97.

to clarify that he was a Marine first and a cryptologist second. He was in fact an accidental cryptologist, one who enjoyed spectacular success. The fact that Lasswell had a more rugged pedigree—the man who once disarmed a Japanese unit and was a great cryptanalyst to boot—shows that it can be done. This is especially important to the Marine Corps, which demands tough, well-rounded officers. Gray, for example, with his experiences in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, satisfied this requirement. Among Gray's achievements, something Lasswell would undoubtedly appreciate, was ensuring that every Marine was first and foremost a rifleman.[98]

Worth noting is that enlisted military personnel studying a language at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC) are still expected to pass room inspections, to salute officers, and to perform physical training. The Services never let them forget that they are soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. A story about Lasswell's achievements might well be in order when a junior Marine complains to their senior about being unable to study for their Russian test because of military duties. Academic work is still the primary military duty at DLIFLC for Marines. One suspects that Lasswell, who had his struggles with Japanese, would have agreed with this policy.[99]

Expanding the Legacy

An interesting phenomenon is underway involving Lasswell's legacy, and it is not cryptologic or even military in nature. There is now an Alva Lasswell Award for Fleet Support, bestowed by the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) in San Diego. One of the recent winners, for example, was a civilian engineer. This award is presented to mid-level active-duty or civil service technical individuals who directly support the Fleet forces. Support can be either through technology innovation or in-service engineering accomplishments.[100]

One has to wonder here about the relevance to Lasswell, who had no obvious technological achievements and was not an engineer. His Fleet support connection is very clear—his language cryptanalytic work was decisive at Midway. According to the NDIA website, Lasswell worked day and night to decipher radio traffic of the Japanese Navy, helping to ensure the American victory at Midway Island. He "was innovative, believed in excellence, and worked tenaciously to get the job done. Innovation, excellence, and tenacity are the hallmarks of this award."[101]

As should be obvious from this study, Lasswell made his name as a cryptologist. The NSA's CLA Lasswell Award applies to cryptologic language analysts only and it clearly reflects a skillset that Lasswell possessed. Yet, this NDIA award, at least according to its description, focuses on Lasswell's personal traits. Similarly, the Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command headquarters on NSA's East Campus, dedicated in 2018, is called Lasswell Hall even though the concept of cyberspace did not exist in Lasswell's day.[102]

So, what does this mean for Lasswell's legacy? He is clearly getting the attention that he never received before, given the number of recognitions he has been getting in the last few years alone. He continues to impact cryptology long after he left the field by helping to institutionalize a skillset that is a requirement for success against tactical cryptosystems. The CLA Lasswell Award and Gray's accomplishments that mirror Lasswell's demonstrate this. Lasswell epitomizes what a Marine can, and should, do in a field not of his own choosing while remaining first and foremost a Marine. The Marine Corps continues to look to him as a

[98] Hunnicutt, *The Marine Corps' Unsung Hero*, 2–3, 5–9; and "General Alfred M. Gray, USMC (Ret), Chairman."
[99] "Student Life: A Day in the Life of a DLIFLC Student," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, accessed 25 August 2023; and Lasswell oral history, 15.
[100] "NDIA San Diego's 2024 A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support," Lasswell Award, National Defense Industrial Association, San Diego Chapter, accessed 25 August 2023; Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, "Navy Engineer Receives NDIA's A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support," press release, accessed 25 August 2023; and Marine Corps Systems Command, "MCTSSA Marine Receives 2018 Lasswell Award for Fleet Support," press release, accessed 25 August 2023.
[101] "NDIA San Diego's 2024 A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support."
[102] "(U) The Crypto-Linguistic Association, (CLA)"; "NDIA San Diego's 2024 A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support"; and Image, "Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Visits MARFORCYBER," Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, accessed 17 October 2024.

role model and someone to emulate.[103] Furthermore, as demonstrated by the dedication of Lasswell Hall, his legacy connects the cryptology of the past with the cyberspace operations of the future, ensuring his impact for years to come. Finally, his traits of innovation, excellence, and tenacity—which gave him his Midway triumph—connect him to other fields as well. This is demonstrated by the Alva Lasswell Award for Fleet Support.[104] Given his growing legacy, there may come a day when every Marine, regardless of military occupational specialty, will know his name.

•1775•

[103] "NDIA San Diego's 2024 A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support"; and Laidig, *Al Gray, Marine: The Early Years, 1950–1967*, vol. 1, 366–67.

[104] "Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Visits MARFORCYBER"; and "NDIA San Diego's 2024 A. Bryan Lasswell Award for Fleet Support."

The Atomic Crucible

FORGING TACTICS IN THE SHADOW OF THE BOMB

By Major Robert Billard Jr., USMC

Abstract: The emergence of the atomic bomb prompted the U.S. Marine Corps to develop tactics and procedures to maneuver within a nuclear environment. This led to the establishment of Marine Corps Test Unit no. 1 (MCTU 1), which represented a unique chapter in the history of the Corps. Established in 1954, this experimental unit served as a testing ground for developing tactics and doctrines in the nascent age of nuclear warfare. This article explores the motivations behind the MCTU's creation, analyzing what the Marine Corps hoped to achieve in this new strategic landscape. It explores the training conducted during Exercises Desert Rock IV (1952) and V (1953) with provisional atomic brigades, then examines the MCTU's development and accomplishments, including its participation in Exercises Desert Rock VI (1955) and VII (1957) and its role in refining doctrine. Finally, the article delves into the long-term impacts of both MCTU 1 and atomic testing, assessing its influence on the evolution of Marine Corps force reconnaissance, heliborne tactics, and the enduring legacy of its research on nuclear combat scenarios.

Keywords: atomic bomb, nuclear warfare, Desert Rock, test unit, Operation Tumbler-Snapper, Operation Upshot-Knothole, Operation Teapot, Operation Plumbbob

The splitting of the atom has changed everything save our mode of thinking, and thus we drift towards unparalleled catastrophe.

~ Albert Einstein[1]

The Marine Corps' Role in a New Atomic Age

After witnessing the effects of the atomic bomb during World War II, U.S. Army and Air Force leaders believed that amphibious landings and even ground warfare would soon become obsolete.[2] The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945 ushered in a new landscape for the prosecution of future wars. By 1949, the Soviet Union had developed its own nuclear capabilities, and the subsequent arms race forever reshaped how fighting forces waged war. The development of these new weapons necessitated new innovations in both the tactics and strategy of warfare. In the face of the unknown, senior U.S. military planners, in conjunction with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), conducted a total of 626 nuclear detonations between 1945 and 1962, requiring more

Maj Robert Billard Jr. is a logistics officer by trade who has served as a presidential strike advisor and operations officer at the National Military Command Center on the Joint Staff since 2022. He serves as a key advisor to the president and senior leaders on the utilization of strategic weapons. He holds a master's degree in emergency management from Tulane University, LA, and is a nonresident graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, College of Distance Education and Training. The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Marine Corps University, the U.S. Marine Corps, the Department of the Navy, or the U.S. government. https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2952-7505
https://doi.org/10.35318/mch.2024100203

[1] Thomas H. Saffer and Orville E. Kelly, *Countdown Zero* (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 15.

[2] "Heritage, Irregular Warfare," U.S. Marines Special Operations Command, accessed 30 May 2024.

than 250,000 military personnel in support of these efforts.[3] These military personnel served in a variety of roles and most experienced some degree of exposure to atomic detonations. These tests were largely conducted in the Pacific Ocean as well as at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) in vicinity of Camp Desert Rock, Nevada.[4] Both locations provided opportunities for the United States to perfect its nuclear command and control capabilities, nuclear weapons arsenal, and its tactics and techniques associated with maneuver in an atomic environment. Pacific Ocean tests famously included detonations over the Marshall Islands and tested airburst and sea-based nuclear detonations. Simultaneously, exercises conducted at Camp Desert Rock took on numbered designators with named operations nested under each.[5]

1. Desert Rock I–III: Operation Buster-Jangle (1951)
2. Desert Rock IV: Operation Tumbler-Snapper (1952)
3. Desert Rock V: Operation Upshot-Knothole (1953)
4. Desert Rock VI: Operation Teapot (1955)
5. Desert Rock VII: Operation Plumbbob (1957)[6]

Terrence R. Fehner and F. G. Gosling, Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Testing, *1951–1963, vol. 1,* Battlefield of the Cold War: The Nevada Test Site *(Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Energy, 2006)*
Desert Rock troops attack toward ground zero during Operation Tumbler-Snapper.

Of note, Marines did not participate in the first three Desert Rock exercises (corresponding with Buster-Jangle) but were present for all remaining iterations that took place between 1952 and 1957 (the Desert Rock exercises did not continue after this point).[7] The seemingly innocuous operation names were selected by the AEC and, according to a contemporary AEC representative, were arbitrarily "dreamed up."[8]

The existence of such weaponry may have called into question the continued need for conventional fighting forces. The U.S. Marine Corps, no stranger to defending its existence, was once again forced to reckon with how to fight America's wars in a global landscape that suddenly appeared alien to the beachheads of World War II. This period called for the Service to develop innovative thinkers capable of creatively posturing the Corps into the nuclear age.

Critical to this effort was Colonel Robert E. Cushman Jr. (later served as the 25th Commandant of the Marine Corps) who, in an open letter penned for the *Marine Corps Gazette* in April 1955, advocated sweeping changes across the Service to account for the modernization that atomic warfare demanded: "I consider this to be the greatest challenge which has yet faced the Marine Corps: in this atomic age, to formulate a sound concept of modern amphibious warfare."[9] Additionally, Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger urged

[3] Saffer and Kelly, *Countdown Zero*, 16.
[4] Saffer and Kelly, *Countdown Zero*, 16.
[5] LtCol Lynn Kimball, "Atomic Marines," Historians' Corner, Carolina Museum of the Marine, 25 April 2022.
[6] Kimball, "Atomic Marines."
[7] Kimball, "Atomic Marines."
[8] Associated Press, "Innocuous Names Are Dreamed Up by AEC," *Wilkes-Barre (PA) Times Leader*, 6 February 1954, 2.
[9] Col Robert E. Cushman Jr., "Amphibious Warfare Tomorrow," *Marine Corps Gazette* 39, no. 4 (April 1955): 30–34.

General Alexander A. Vandegrift to rethink the Corps' amphibious doctrine in light of nuclear weapons.[10] Consequently, General Vandegrift approved recommendations to activate Marine Corps Test Unit No. 1 (MCTU 1), an experimental unit that served as a testing ground for developing nuclear warfare tactics and doctrines, under the command of Colonel Edward N. Rydalch.[11] As an aside for historical context, while the correspondence of Colonel Cushman, Lieutenant General Geiger, and General Vandegrift provides the predominant baseline for the creation of this particular testing unit, the 1950s were a transformative time for the Marine Corps, with other letters urging the Commandant to consider air-ground relations, the Marine air-ground task force concept, a provisional force service regiment, landing force logistics concepts, and the employment of Marine Corps aviation.[12] There were many voices recommending various concepts and organizational changes to the Commandant at this time, and while there were seemingly few advocating for the inclusion of atomic tactics, their advice was registered and yielded action. The atomic maneuver lessons learned from MCTU 1 and from the Marines directly involved in atomic testing came at a great cost to many of those involved—but the exercises and testing were vital to forging tactics that an uncertain nation felt would be necessary in future conflicts.

Establishment of MCTU 1

The conclusion of World War II sent a message to strategic planners that new methods had to be pioneered to fight future wars. As historian Bruce F. Meyers describes,

> With the lessons of the use of nuclear weapons that ended World War II still fresh in the minds of Marine Corps planners, Col. Robert Cushman . . . authored a staff report in December 1946 to Commandant Archibald [*sic*] Vandegrift that questioned the viability of massive World War II-type amphibious landings over small areas subject to potential tactical nuclear weapons.[13]

At this time, the deterrent of mutually assured destruction was not the de facto philosophy among military planners. As evident by both Colonel Cushman's advice as well as the Marines' experience at Tumbler-Snapper and Upshot-Knothole, the prevailing thought process assumed that tactical nuclear weaponry was now the standard for future conflicts. As a result, underlying Marine Corps tactics needed to evolve to fit within this new paradigm, necessitating the creation of a new experimental test unit.

On 1 July 1954, the unit was formally established at Camp Horno at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California.[14] The primary purpose of MCTU 1 as promulgated by the Commandant of the Marine Corps was to "evolve organizational concepts for the marine landing force under conditions of nuclear warfare."[15] An additional objective for the test unit was to "develop tactics and techniques responsive to the full employment of nuclear weapons."[16] In practice, this resulted in the following objectives outlined in reporting filed by the 3d Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade (the first to be fielded, which contained the test unit) as follows:

1. To afford commanders and staffs realistic training in planning and conducting operations that are supported by atomic weapons.
2. To further test and evaluate tactics and techniques for the execution of air-ground task force missions when atomic weapons are employed.
3. To develop new tactics and techniques to exploit the effects of an atomic explosion when

[10] "Heritage, Irregular Warfare."
[11] "Heritage, Irregular Warfare."
[12] LtCol Kenneth J. Clifford, *Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1900–1970* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1973), 85.
[13] Bruce F. Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave* (New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2004), 37.
[14] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, 40.
[15] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, 39.
[16] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, 39.

atomic weapons are employed in support of air-ground task force.

4. To familiarize personnel with the phenomena incident to an atomic explosion, and the effects thereof.
5. To familiarize personnel with the passive defense measures that serve to minimize or protect against the effects of an atomic explosion.[17]

Other developing tactics were refined throughout these exercises, such as reconnaissance and heliborne operations, but the MCTU 1 was by and large focused on adapting to the effects of nuclear warfare.[18] The reports from MCTU 1 were given directly to the Commandant of the Marine Corps to aid in the development and testing of new tactics and techniques for the nuclear age.[19] Marine participation in the Desert Rock series of exercises envisaged, and previously executed in Desert Rock IV and V, a coordinated air-ground exercise that could be conducted during a single or in multiple series of atomic tests.[20]

The planning for Desert Rock VI with MCTU 1 was designed to significantly expand on the lessons learned from the previous exercises. Early in the planning process, it was identified that the "achievement of the utmost precision and the closest coordination between the air (both helicopters and close support aircraft) and the ground troops was clearly recognized."[21] Further, MCTU 1 specifically had a training mission to "achieve a high state of readiness in conventional tactics and techniques."[22] Training blocks for MCTU 1 were broken down into three phases to fully prepare the troops for the rigors of atomic maneuvers: preliminary, advanced, and Desert Rock rehearsal training.[23] Specific items included the organization of heliteams, slingloading equipment, embarkation and debarkation training, helicopter support unit training, heliborne assault on hastily prepared defensive positions, landing and employment of infantry supporting arms, understanding the principles of atomic explosions and their effects, and medical care for radiological effects as well as radiation detection.[24] The after action report for the exercise indicated by all accounts that the training phases were adequate for developing an effective air-ground task force operating in a nuclear environment.

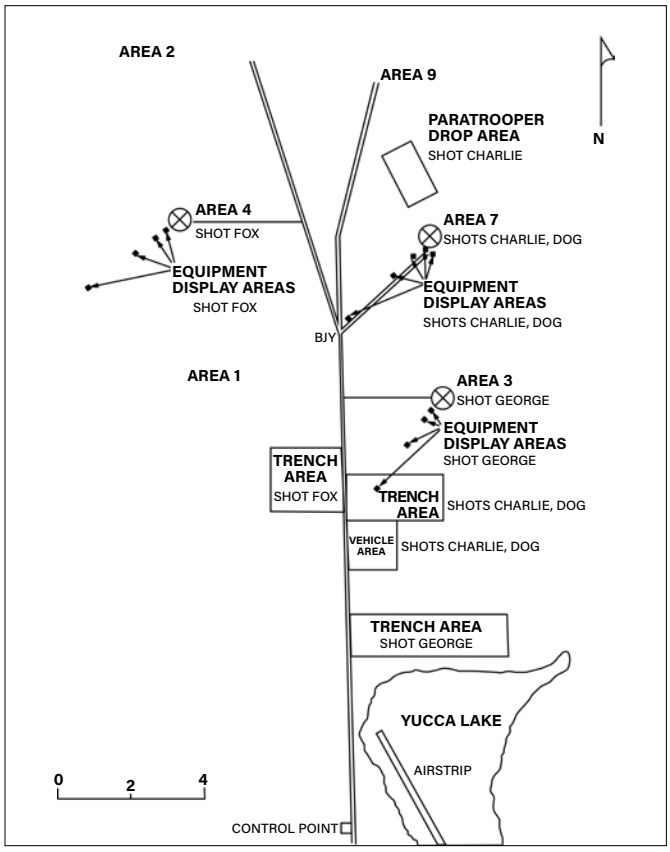


Figure 3-1 in Ponton et al., Operation Tumbler-Snapper, 1952, *68, adapted by MCUP*

Figure showing Exercise Desert Rock IV trench and display areas. The shot Dog trench area for Marines was less than 10 km from the detonation area.

The Corps' First Foray into Atomic Warfare

Prior to the formal establishment of MCTU 1, the Marine Corps provided troops to Desert Rock Exercises

[17] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI—Marine Corps* (Camp Pendleton, CA: Technical Library of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, 3d Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade, 1955), I-1.
[18] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, 39.
[19] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, 100.
[20] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, I-1.
[21] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, IV-1.
[22] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, IV-1.
[23] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, IV-1.
[24] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, IV-1–IV-2.

General Photograph File of the U.S. Marine Corps, National Archives and Records Administration, photo ID: 532466
Atomic Energy Commission Proving Ground, NV. Marines prepare to charge an objective seconds after an atomic explosion. More than 2,000 Marines participated in the atomic testing, commanded by BGen Joseph C. Burger, comprising the largest number of troops to participate in the tests to date.

IV and V (Operations Tumbler-Snapper and Upshot-Knothole, respectively). An estimated 1,980 Marines from the Provisional Atomic Exercise Units participated first in Tumbler-Snapper, while 2,167 Marines were identified from the 2d Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade at Upshot-Knothole.[25] The Marines task organized to form composite units for the Joint forces present at Desert Rock for Tumbler-Snapper were tasked with three specific phases:

1. Observation of the nuclear blast,
2. Conduct of the tactical maneuver, and
3. Tour of the display area.[26]

The first "shot," as the detonations were referred to, that the Marines were subjected to was shot "Dog" on 1 May 1952 in support of Tumbler-Snapper.[27] At approximately 0830 Pacific Standard Time, shot Dog was detonated via airburst at a height of 1,040 feet—exposing the entrenched Marines to a 19-kiloton blast (for reference, the blast at Hiroshima was 15 kilotons).[28] The shot Dog tactical maneuver was the first atomic maneuver conducted by U.S. Marines.[29] Marines positioned themselves in fighting positions to observe the blast, after which they assembled into tactical formations and maneuvered through predetermined checkpoints and objectives. They were given specific maneuvers to execute out of the trenches on a set timeline following detonation of the shot.[30] For the shot, some Marines were located in trenches "as close as 6,400 meters to ground zero," from where they watched the detonation and executed maneuver objectives, which were followed by radiological survey teams.[31] The intent was that radiological safety personnel also monitor their movement and advise accordingly.[32] During Tumbler-Snapper, the units were also subjected to a follow-on psychological test to compare the effects before and after witnessing a nuclear detonation.[33] During the post-detonation tour of the training site en route to the ground-zero site, Marines encountered displays that were established between 270 and 1,600 meters from the location of the detonation.[34] Ultimately, the Marines "stopped their tour

[25] Note: Marines from 1st and 2d Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Battalions at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune, NC, respectively, were among these. These provisional units comprised Marines from 3d Engineer Battalion, 3d Marine Division; 1st Battalion, 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division; 2d Amphibious Reconnaissance Battalion; and 2d Battalion, 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division, as maneuver elements with observers from Quantico, VA; Parris Island, SC; and Washington, DC, as well as 3d Marines. Jean Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper 1952* (Washington, DC: Defense Nuclear Agency, 1982), 11, 173; and Jean Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole 1953* (Washington, DC: Defense Nuclear Agency, 1982), 5.

[26] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 70.
[27] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 65.
[28] Defense Threat Reduction Agency, "Operation Tumbler-Snapper," fact sheet, September 2021, 8.
[29] "Operation Tumbler-Snapper," fact sheet, 3.
[30] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 70.
[31] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 70.
[32] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 70.
[33] Ponton et al., *Operation Tumbler-Snapper*, 72; and "Operation Tumbler-Snapper," fact sheet, 3.
[34] "Operation Tumbler-Snapper," fact sheet, 5.

General Photograph File of the U.S. Marine Corps, National Archives and Records Administration, photo ID: 532467
Marines Poth and Wilson (full names and ranks unavailable) do a little clowning for the camera after shot Dog in Operation Tumbler-Snapper, 1 May 1952.

short, approaching as close as 820 meters to ground zero, due to the intensity of the radiation that was being incurred" (as determined by radiological testing kits carried by participants).[35] This type of exposure was later alleged to have been the direct source of various cancers incurred by survivors, as discussed later in this article. It was, however, consistent with the tactical situation envisioned by planners at the time—maneuver elements lying in wait for offensive atomic weapons to envelop objectives in the wake of the detonation.

The following year, Marines once more were committed to nuclear testing during Operation Upshot-Knothole. After action reporting from the previous year pushed the Marine Corps to improve its posture with a more diverse task organization. While the number of Marines committed was comparable to the previous year, one key distinction at Upshot-Knothole was the addition of an aviation component. Shot "Badger" was tailored specifically to "test the ability of helicopters to transport troops in an at-

[35] "Operation Tumbler-Snapper," fact sheet, 5.

tack after the employment of a nuclear weapon."[36] The provisional brigade contained a brigade headquarters as well as maneuver elements from 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2d Marine Division; 2d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division; and Marine Helicopter Transport Group 16 (MAG [HR] 16).[37]

According to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency report, the maneuver for the Marines followed a similar pattern to the previous year but with trenches now staged approximately "3,660 meters south-southwest of ground zero."[38] The Marines then conducted a ground attack, but 1st Battalion's maneuvers were halted when dosimeter readings exceeded 3.0 roentgens.[39] For reference, committees at the time determined that 0.1 roentgens per day per body constituted a safe exposure limit.[40] The exposure for some was even worse; some Marines retained radiation film badges with exposure levels reaching up to 7.1 roentgens.[41] Helicopter crews did not fare any better with regard to exposure. For perspective, the following passage describes radiological effects experienced by the heliborne crews.

> In the operational helicopter test at [shot] BADGER, four helicopters were airborne at shot-time. Two helicopters were about 14 kilometers southeast of the shot, flying toward ground zero. Two others were hovering at a point 13 kilometers southeast of ground zero. After the shot, the helicopters followed different flight paths toward ground zero and landed at different points determined by radiological conditions in the area. Two of the helicopters encountered radiation intensities greater than 50 R/h before they could take evasive action.[42]

While R/h measuring roentgens per hour is not commonly used as a measure of radiological exposure anymore, this can be converted to 0.5 sieverts (commonly abbreviated as Sv) per hour. For perspective, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission states that an annual radiation dose limit for workers is only 0.05 Sv.[43] Exposure to 50 R/h, or 0.5 Sv, could potentially lead to the development of acute radiation syndrome (ARS) for those involved, which can cause nausea, vomiting, skin burns, fatigue, infections, and ultimately lead to cancer.[44] The addition of heliborne maneuvers into the scenario set the stage for the future of the Marine Corps' participation in atomic exercises by examining the realistic operational proximity for these crews. Following shot Badger, Marines continued to participate in other shots that took place at Operation Upshot-Knothole as both observers and as helicopter support at shot "Simon."[45] The tactical appreciation gleaned from both operations only expanded in coming years the Marine Corps' commitment further to the Desert Rock series of exercises. Specifically, units learned how unit movement, both by ground and air, was affected by nuclear detonations.

The Atomic Crucible

In March 1955, MCTU 1 was finally ready for the conduct of the atomic exercise at Camp Desert Rock. The Marines participated in shot "Bee," which followed shot "Apple"; fallout from the latter was still present during the conduct of the Marines' maneuvers.[46] At 0505 Pacific Standard Time on 22 March 1955, the 8-kiloton shot Bee was detonated in Area 7 of the Yucca Flat area of the designated NTS.[47] Marines immediately received permission to commence the tactical portion of the exercise; according to the after action report, "troops in the trench area slated to participate in the maneuver . . . commenced marching to Loading

[36] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 5.
[37] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 5.
[38] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 5.
[39] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 5.
[40] "Radiation Safety," Radioactivity, Science, The Manhattan Project—An Interactive History, Office of History and Heritage Resources, U.S. Department of Energy, accessed 29 May 2024.
[41] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 5.
[42] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 6.
[43] Subpart C–Occupational Dose Limits, Part 20–Standards for Protection against Radiation, NRC Regulations, Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 21 May 1991.
[44] "Radiation Health Effects," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, accessed 19 November 2024.
[45] Ponton et al., *Operation Upshot-Knothole*, 8.
[46] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VI-1.
[47] Defense Threat Reduction Agency, "Operation Teapot," fact sheet, September 2021, 4.

Zones," which it noted represented aircraft carriers for the purposes of the exercise.[48] Throughout the maneuvers, helicopter lift was used extensively to transport troops between the various loading zones to test the viability of embarkation and troop transport in a nuclear environment. The exercise report highlighted that helicopter availability ultimately exceeded the original planned timeline—leading to the realization that rapid troop movement and objective seizure was possible through extensive leverage of helicopter assets.[49]

The lasting impact from the Marines associated with Desert Rock VI was best summed up as: "All hands gained a high degree of appreciation of its power . . . and its proper place in the family of weapons, both nuclear and conventional, available to the Marine Corps. From the standpoint of the individual Marine, the opportunity to witness a nuclear detonation was a most interesting experience, and proved highly instructive."[50] It was deemed that nuclear weapons could be exploited with great success by a Marine force as envisioned by the Commandant of the Marine Corps.[51] While acknowledging that the circumstances of amphibious operations in a nuclear environment were unprecedented, nuclear weapons nonetheless still fit into this concept of a future fight for Marines by treating them as an evolution of existing conventional munitions. Consistent with the recommendations in the after action report of Desert Rock VI, MCTU 1 continued to execute these training endeavors at Desert Rock VII, Operation Plumbbob, in 1957. The recommendations from Desert Rock VI stated that the Marine Corps should continue to participate, doctrine should continue to be updated to reflect this type of special warfare, and that developmental units should participate to the extent necessary to continue developing doctrine and tactics that can be used in special warfare.[52] This latter point directly corresponds to the mindset that forged reconnaissance units from the atomic fires of these tests.

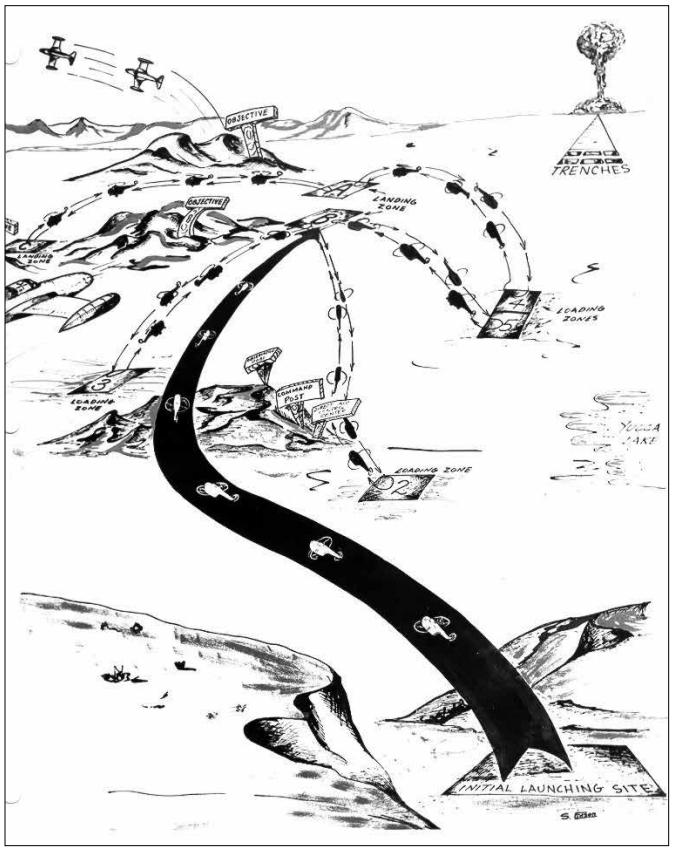


Photo courtesy of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Nevada Site Office

Visual depiction of Marine involvement in Desert Rock VI, shot Bee, from start to finish. Minutes after an atomic explosion at the Nevada Test Site, Marines aboard assault helicopters swarmed from widely dispersed points on the objective in a realistic maneuver to exploit the immediate effects of an atomic device against a hypothetical enemy. Although the actual atomic device is shown exploding in the upper right, it was theoretically air-dropped over the objective area so the hard-hitting Marine forces could move in immediately after the explosion. The helicopter shuttle service was accomplished in record time. The last troops picked up were those in loading zones 4 and 5 who had witnessed the explosion from the trenches, and they proceeded to their pickup station immediately after the blast. As the deep penetration maneuver was being conducted, Marine jet fighter aircraft buzzed angrily overhead to provide close air support.

Perhaps the most extensive Marine Corps maneuvering within a nuclear environment occurred in 1957. Operation Plumbbob took place at the NTS, with applicable shots from the Marine Corps—"Priscilla," "Diablo," and "Hood"—occurring between

[48] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VI-4.
[49] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VI-5.
[50] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VII-1.
[51] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VII-1.
[52] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, VII-2.

National Museum of the U.S. Navy, photo ID: 330-PS-7272 (A-327284)

A Marine Fairchild R4Q Packet transport plane drops supplies during tactical training preparatory to atomic bomb blast at Yucca Flat, NV. Two-thousand Marines participated in the series of atomic tests conducted by the Department of Defense with the Atomic Energy Commission, 16 March 1955.

24 June and 5 July 1957.[53] While 311 Marines served solely as observers for Priscilla, and Diablo ended in a misfire, shot Hood was the "largest nuclear burst ever detonated in the United States up to that time" at 74 kilotons.[54] Hood required the Marines to further evolve the tactics that had been tested during shot Bee during Operation Teapot, as close air support tactics in an atomic environment played a large role in this exercise.[55]

In addition to close air support and heliborne tactics, an important legacy of the MCTU's involvement in the Desert Rock exercises, albeit indirectly related to atomic maneuvers, was the inception of Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance. Bruce Meyers, a

[53] G. Frank et al., *Analysis of Radiation Exposure, 4th Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade, Exercise Desert Rock VII, Operation Plumbbob* (Washington, DC: Defense Nuclear Agency, 1981), 9–10.

[54] Mary Jo Viscuso et al., *Shot Priscilla: A Test of the Plumbbob Series* (Washington, DC: Defense Nuclear Agency, 1957), 65; and *Analysis of Radiation Exposure, 4th Marine Corps Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade, Exercise Desert Rock VII, Operation Plumbbob*, 5.

[55] Kimball, "Atomic Marines."

National Museum of the U.S. Navy, photo ID: 330-PS-7272 (A-327286)
Marine helicopters transport troops and supplies during tactical training preparatory to atomic bomb test at Yucca Flat, NV, conducted by the Department of Defense with the Atomic Energy Commission, 16 March 1955.

Marine officer and reconnaissance veteran, described that

> [M]arines recognized the need for long-range reconnaissance operations deep in hostile territory to provide timely combat intelligence information, particularly as it concerned proposed landing zones and sites. Test Unit 1's recommendations to test and evaluate these new techniques for gathering intelligence were approved, and the force recon journey was underway. . . . The emphasis in Test Unit 1, and during the early days of 1st Force . . . was on the development of new operational techniques for insertion, both parachute and submerged submarine, and extraction of reconnaissance and pathfinder personnel deep behind enemy lines.[56]

Nuclear testing provided a unique target of opportunity for Marines to test new and innovative approaches to warfare.

[56] Meyers, *Fortune Favors the Brave*, ix, xv.

Operational Challenges, Near and Far

Despite the exercise reports touting the initial MCTU 1 participation in Desert Rock as a rousing success, there were many challenges associated with developing tactical procedures in a nuclear environment. Many were directly associated with exposure to such blasts and the attendant radiation. As a veteran of shot Hood later described, "You could see the two bones in your forearm, and a bright red light. Within a few seconds, shock waves from the bomb hit these trenches and I was immediately thrown from one side of the trench wall to the other. . . . I was frightened beyond belief."[57] Some were the indirect results of constraints placed by either military or atomic energy experts. For example, a report from the 3d Provisional Atomic Exercise Brigade following Desert Rock VI stated that restrictions imposed on troop maneuvers precluded the desired realism and a number of artificialities not normally present in a field exercise were introduced, namely the allowable proximity to atomic blasts.[58] A historical report from the Department of Energy echoes this sentiment—there needed to be reasonable proximity to the blasts to properly simulate the type of warfare that troops were being trained to fight. For safety concerns, distance limitations were placed on participating troops; at one point, troops were not authorized to stage any closer than 11 kilometers from the blast location.[59] This represented an artificiality inconsistent with emerging doctrines of atomic maneuvering that the exercises sought to replicate. Pressure from the military demanded closer proximity to the blasts for training to the extent that the Marine Corps stated it would not participate in Desert Rock if the 11-kilometer limit was imposed again.[60] Ultimately, the pressure from the military forced the Atomic Energy Commission to drop objections and allow for a 7,000-meter mitigating factor.[61] While these mitigation factors were implemented for the safety of the participants, they were largely fought by military units until they were removed to the point of obsolescence. By Desert Rock VI, Marines had successfully been inducted into the world of atomic warfare, including amphibious warfare—deemed inevitable—that the Marine Corps needed to be prepared to support.

Legacy and Impact

The legacy of Marine Corps involvement in atomic exercises is complicated. At its core, there was reasonable expectation that future wars required nuclear weapons. The basic understanding of what that looked, sounded, smelled, and felt like no doubt provided invaluable insight into how maneuver warfare should be conducted in an atomic environment. Close air support and reconnaissance tactics were heavily honed during this period by crafting tactics and doctrine to be utilized in emerging forms of warfare; leaders learned how to leverage heliborne assets to quickly move troops across the battlespace in response to the need presented by an atomic threat. They also learned how to manage the reconnaissance assets that would be needed to determine direct atomic effects in the battlespace. These impacts reached much further than the originally anticipated atomic maneuvering objectives laid out at the beginning. Marine Corps Test Unit No. 1 provided immeasurable value to Marine Corps doctrine that extended far beyond training for a nuclear environment, with reconnaissance capabilities being formalized for future warfighters.

However, the lack of proper precautions against the dangers of nuclear fallout led to the unnecessary suffering and deaths of many Marines associated with the training. Detailed analysis was done between the 1950s and 1980s of the radiological fallout experienced by veterans of the Desert Rock exercises. Ultimately, this culminated in compensation from the government for atomic veterans for resulting cancers as well as other conditions associated with exposure

[57] Tom Saffer eyewitness interview in "Fallout (1945)," *People's Century*, PBS, 1995.
[58] *Report of Exercise Desert Rock VI–Marine Corps*, I-2.
[59] Terrence R. Fehner and F. G. Gosling, *Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Testing, 1951–1963*, vol. 1, *Battlefield of the Cold War: The Nevada Test Site* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Energy, 2006), 75.
[60] Fehner and Gosling, *Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Testing, 1951–1963*, 75.
[61] Fehner and Gosling, *Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Testing, 1951–1963*, 76.

National Museum of the U.S. Navy, photo ID: 330-PS-7272 (A-327287)
Marines disembark the helicopters that transported them during tactical training preparatory to the atomic bomb test at Yucca Flat, NV, 16 March 1955.

from atomic blasts.[62] Operation Plumbbob veteran Thomas H. Saffer, a second lieutenant at the time of the exercise, said, "To be destroyed by an insidious killer because some eager, myopic hawks wanted to play with nuclear firecrackers was . . . more than I could bear."[63] Saffer later gave congressional testimony on the health complications experienced by these veterans. Many of the impacts of the effects of atomic radiation were not well known at the time of testing (e.g., ARS-related effects that ultimately lead to cancer), and thus these effects were not fully studied and understood until decades later. In spite of this, some still believed that the lessons learned were worth the cost. As Saffer later described a Department of Defense official speaking to a widow: "The experiments were invaluable. We learned so much from them. . . . I just wanted you to know all of us have benefited from those tests. They were worthwhile, and the men who died were not sacrificed in vain."[64]

The story of atomic Marines during the Cold War is one not often taught or understood in the pantheon of Marine lore; but the threat of nuclear war looms ever-present as an immediate risk to peace and stability in the world order. So long as caches of nuclear arms persist in the world, their lessons may yet prove necessary.

•1775•

[62] Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration, "Are YOU an Atomic Veteran?," brochure, 2012.
[63] Saffer and Kelly, *Countdown Zero*, 291.
[64] Saffer and Kelly, *Countdown Zero*, 292.

BOOK REVIEWS

Noah F. Crawford

Life in Jefferson Davis' Navy. By Barbara Brooks Tomblin. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019. Pp. 336. $17.40, cloth.)

Since Bell Irvin Wiley regaled readers with insights into *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (1943) and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (1952), American Civil War scholars have directed readers' eyes down the chain of command to see how enlisted soldiers experienced the conflict. While this initially took the form of seeing battles from the ground floor à la John Keegan, scholarship in recent decades considers what Army service looked like beyond the battlefield. Civil War historians increasingly ask readers to consider what everyday life was like for soldiers. In pursuing this task, however, scholars stare intently at boots on the dry ground at the expense of those on ships' decks. The omission is especially curious given the long-accepted maxim that Union naval successes—particularly those of its brown-water navy—played an integral role in crippling the Confederate war machine. Barbara Brooks Tomblin's *Life in Jefferson Davis' Navy* capably redirects the historiographic rudder toward understanding the wartime experiences of Confederate sailors.

Tomblin argues that Civil War naval history thoroughly examines Union operations, Confederate operations, and Union sailors' daily lives, but not the missing quartile of Confederate sailors' daily lives. Drawing on "letters, diaries, journals, regulations, and official reports," Tomblin systematically examines each aspect of Confederate sailors' lives—from religion and entertainment to discipline and duty (p. 2). When the Confederate Committee on Naval Affairs sent telegrams to all U.S. naval officers with instructions to resign and report to Mobile, Alabama, 259 answered the call. Just as scores of Southern-born cadets left West Point in 1861, so did 111 of the 267 cadets at the Naval Academy at Annapolis leave their studies; many joined their respective states' navies before those entities were subsumed by the fledgling *Confederate Navy*. To promote naval military education of their own, the Confederate States established their own naval academy to operate on the school ship *Patrick Henry*. In further imitation of the United States, the Confederacy established an accompanying *Confederate Marine Corps* of about 1,000 officers and enlisted. Despite its replication of many aspects of the U.S. Navy, the *Confederate Navy* did have some important distinctions, including its refusal to enlist African Americans as sailors, although they could serve as pilots. Indeed, 40 percent of pilots in the Savannah Squadron were enslaved people (free African Americans, however, were barred from piloting).

The creation and growth of the *Confederate Navy* appropriately comprise the first two chapters. When the opposing armies first clashed at Manassas, Virginia, in July 1861, the *Confederate Navy* boasted 500 sailors; by war's end, some 5,000 sailors donned Confederate gray (plus some 1,300 Marines). Recruiting was a consistent problem in the Confederacy, and boys as young as 14 years old were permitted to enlist (although anyone under 21 years old required parental consent). In 1864, the Confederate Congress passed legislation mandating that soldiers in the army who had worked as seamen before the war be immediately transferred to naval service. Commerce raiders even accepted volunteer crewmen—including, on at least

Noah F. Crawford is a graduate assistant lecturer and PhD candidate in history at Texas A&M University, College Station. His research on refugees examines the intersection of military history and social history during the American Civil War era.

one occasion, a contingent of Hawaiians—from captured Union vessels to man their own ships. Confederate sailors adopted regulation routines, drilled at their stations, complained about food shortages, and enjoyed their leisure time. Tomblin recounts sailors tossing biscuits to dolphins, celebrating Christmas, and drinking grog, which the *Confederate Navy* continued to issue even after the Union Navy discontinued the ration in 1862.

To be sure, Tomblin does not fall into the trap of excluding military operations entirely; combat—although a small percentage of sailors' lives—was often part of it. Several chapters cover naval operations on the coast and on the high seas. Tomblin's book includes descriptions of familiar actions such as those at Hampton Roads, Virginia, and Mobile Bay, Alabama, as well as a riveting narrative of CSS *Arkansas*'s 1862 rampage through Union gunboats on the Yazoo River. Since Tomblin focuses on sailors' lives rather than details of ships, the author necessarily describes engagements in which sailors and Marines fought on land as "naval infantry," such as Commodore John R. Tucker's naval brigade during the Appomattox campaign. Casualties from these battles were fortunate to find themselves at naval hospitals that Tomblin diagnoses as "commendable" despite "shortages and disruptions caused by the war" (p. 121). These forays into operational history and military medicine will satiate the appetites of readers whose interest lies in those areas without diverting too far from the book's primary topic of Confederate naval life.

Has Tomblin brought Civil War naval historiography closer to a social history of a military environment in the spirit of Bell Wiley? If not, she has done something very near like it. Thoroughly researched and cleanly written, *Life in Jefferson Davis' Navy* provides nonspecialists with a superb introduction to the *Confederate Navy*. Naval historians will commend Tomblin's concise, yet wide-ranging synthesis, while Civil War historians will appreciate this initial foray into expanding scholarship on life in the *Confederate Navy*. For either the Civil War or the naval historian, Tomblin's work deserves a spot on the bookshelf.

•1775•

Aaron D. Dilday, PhD

Fidelis: A Memoir. By Teresa Fazio. (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2020. Pp. 232. $28.95, cloth; $19.95, paperback, e-book.)

In *Fidelis*, Dr. Teresa Fazio's deeply personal account reads like a cathartic coming-of-age story, highlighting themes of leadership, integrity, and gender. Fazio's psychoanalysis seems to place much emphasis on childhood trauma as the foundation for her choices and experiences as an adult. Through flashbacks to her past, Fazio illustrates how her childhood experiences defined much of her life's choices. These scenes tend to focus on power dynamics and duty to others. Fazio often copes with her childhood trauma through adopting a tough, tomboy exterior to avoid drawing attention to herself.

Fazio grew up in suburban New York, where her parents' divorce proved a definitive moment in her childhood. She describes in great detail seeing the agony on her father's face when he found out that his wife had an affair. Living at her mother and stepfather's home failed to bring stability or comfort. She recounts memories of a violent, controlling stepfather; an emotionally, and possibly physically, abusive father; and a mother who remained emotionally aloof. She recalled an illustrative incident of her stepfather abusing her brother, stating that "today I know that expecting a lightweight, fourteen-year-old girl to defend her brother against a grown man was, at best, unrealistic. But when I saw the nosebleed stains on Matt's mattress the morning after the incident, I felt even worse for letting him thrash alone" (p. 38). Scenes like this highlight the tension Fazio experienced between feelings of duty to others coupled with her own sense of powerlessness and desire to remain invisible.

Fazio recalled her first inclination for military service when her family stopped at a Marine recruiting station while she was in middle school. "I liked the uniforms. I liked the weapons. I loved the intimation of power—power of which Matt, Dave, and I possessed little at home" (p. 37). Fortunately, attending an undergraduate program at MIT offered Fazio the escape she longed for. Participating in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) provided a means to pay for her escape. After graduating, her obligatory four years of service commenced with her first deployment, a seven-month sojourn to an overseas desert warzone on the other side of the planet.

As a fresh second lieutenant, Fazio was the junior-most officer in Communications Company and was assigned to lead two platoons. The wire and maintenance platoons carried the primary responsibility for maintaining the internet and telephone operations on base. Fazio describes the agony of imposter syndrome confronting a young officer trying to serve two masters: her commanding officer and the career noncommissioned officers with often decades of job experience. Unfortunately, these two masters rarely saw eye-to-eye, leaving "Little T" in the middle without pleasing either: "In a move that would eventually backfire, I navigated our company's power dynamics through constant appeasement. When tactical disagreements arose, I let my head be turned by each debater. . . . I could not win, and yet I felt too unqualified—and conflict-averse—to make the call on my own. I was, after all, a twenty-three-year-old second lieutenant, with six months of classroom training but virtually no field experience. I did not yet know that all second lieutenants were unsure of themselves, that everyone navigated steep learning curves differently—and just how close to burnout my compulsive people-pleasing would bring me" (p. 29).

Fazio also struggled with her own identities: what did it mean to be a woman and an officer? Mar-

Dr. Aaron D. Dilday earned his PhD in history from Texas A&M University, College Station, and is currently an assistant professor of history at Palo Alto College in San Antonio, TX. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3159-9178

la, a fellow junior officer, provided a cautionary tale for those women who dared to embrace even a modicum of femininity. Marla's public relationship with a fellow male officer "undermined her credibility" and left her "perceived as unprofessional" while leaving her beau's reputation intact if not improved (p. 74). Furthermore, "[Marla's] instinctive femininity and the attention it drew highlighted my embodiment of its opposite. I figured I had two options: be like her and be desired or be sexless and serious—but viewed as a legitimate leader. Our troops respected me. But I felt like a failure at womanhood, compared to her" (pp. 51–52). Fazio's determined avoidance of her femininity arose from perceptions of power, approval of leadership, and social acceptance in the male-dominated Marine Corps.

In Iraq, the monotony of base life was broken with seemingly random bursts of mortar rounds exploding nearby. Fazio negotiated the anxiety by pushing herself harder to demonstrate capable leadership over her Marines. She tried to control her environment through fixed routines and excessive exercise. Eventually, she befriended another officer, Jack, who oversaw mortuary affairs and used this relationship as a coping mechanism for the mental trauma she was facing. However, in time, her relationship with Jack grew sexual in nature, threatening to upend her efforts at maintaining a professional appearance. The tenuous relationship with Jack, whose wife and son were waiting for him at home, haunted Fazio long after her deployment ended. Jack, along with other traumas, followed her back to the United States. She describes at least two occasions—one in Iraq and one in the United States—where she seriously contemplated suicide. Only years later did she begin to move beyond these experiences and memories to construct a new life outside of the Marine Corps.

When thinking of era-defining memoirs from Marines, clear choices would be E. B. Sledge's *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (1981) for World War II and Philip Caputo's *A Rumor of War* (1977) for the war in Vietnam. One could make the case for *Fidelis* to become an era-defining memoir for the Iraq War. Echoing the work of Matthew Gallagher, Fazio's powerful story is written with a modern, fast-paced style and a dash of pop-culture flair. This work is highly recommended for undergraduate courses or those simply looking for a quick and deeply engaging read. It offers numerous points for discussion such as the discord between wartime service and civilian life, survivor's guilt, and grappling with moral injury. Like Sledge and Caputo, Fazio's thought-provoking story is one this reviewer will not soon forget.

•1775•

R. Blake Dunnavent, PhD

Clear, Hold, and Destroy: Pacification in Phú Yên and the American War in Vietnam. By Robert J. Thompson III. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2021. Pp. 352. $39.95, cloth; $24.95, paperback; $29.95, Kindle/e-book.)

Robert J. Thompson III's monograph *Clear, Hold, and Destroy* is an attempt at an ambitious contribution to the historiography of America's Cold War involvement in Southeast Asia. The author intends to examine pacification efforts in one province, Phú Yên, in the former nation of South Vietnam from the multifaceted perspective of the villagers in their hamlets to the decision makers at the White House, Pentagon, and Saigon. The crux of Thompson's thesis stresses how pacification required, depended on, and was welded to conventional warfare. He resolves to correct years of scholastic misinterpretations, which, he states leaves "an incomplete portrait of the war" (p. 5). To defend his assertions, the author weaves, unnecessarily, a complicated narrative for the reader using this single province as the lynchpin to demonstrate his belief in the failure of pacification efforts nationwide in South Vietnam, which deviates from Thompson's astute and singular premise.

Thompson concisely divides this book into nine manageable chapters for the reader's assessment of his premise. From the involvement of the French control of an Imperial Indochina to America's eventual combat withdrawal assisting the South Vietnamese nation to stem the tide of communism in 1973, he postulates the amorphous meaning of pacification as an illusionary concept with each governing and military force sanctioning a plethora of programs to achieve impossible goals for this seemingly simple notion. Yet, he praises the Army commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, (COMUSMACV) General William C. Westmoreland and his replacement General Creighton W. Abrams for their understanding of the "importance of pacification" and writes that they "executed the war on its behalf, [front and center]" (p. 6). These men, according to Thompson, understood that pacification was not "the other or civilian war" as embraced by so many military and political leaders in Saigon and Washington, but part of one conflict encompassing a broader definition. At this point, early in the text, Thompson's primary hypothesis begins to unravel with contradictory statements and the omissions of key figures and programs that provided the building blocks for pacification in Phú Yên and the entire South Vietnamese countryside.

The author scantily mentions neither the men that coordinated pacification nor the programs they directed. Robert W. Komer maintained without a civilian component working jointly with COMUSMACV's direct military leadership subduing the Viet Cong would be near impossible. Komer's close relationship with President Lyndon B. Johnson led to the establishment of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary (later called Rural) Development Support (CORDS) program, placed under the direction of Westmoreland, with Komer serving as his deputy for this civilian side of pacification throughout South Vietnam. When President Johnson promoted Komer to his inner group on Vietnam, the former CIA section chief of Saigon, William Egan Colby, assumed

Dr. R. Blake Dunnavent is an associate professor of history at Louisiana State University, Shreveport. He has published a number of entries for various sources, such as *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social and Military History* (1998), that discuss, variously, pacification efforts, the Phoenix Program, and CIA station chief in Saigon and deputy to U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) for the Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) and later to executive director of the CIA William Egan Colby, and he has written about the U.S. Navy's role on the inland waterways of South Vietnam and its contribution to pacification in the chapter "Battle for the Mekong: The River War in Vietnam," in *Rolling Thunder in a Gentle Land: The Vietnam War Revisited* (editor Andrew Wiest, 2006). He also spoke to the former U.S. Marine Corps Riverine Training Group at Camp Lejeune, NC, in 1993 about pacifywing narcoguerrillas in Central America during the Andean Initiative using riverine tactics from the Vietnam War. In 2006, he spoke at the CNA symposium "Riverine Warfare: Back to the Future," about riverine warfare tactics that could be used to obtain maximum lethality on Iraqi inland waterways.

Komer's position and was even given ambassadorial status coupled with the title of deputy of CORDS linked to COMUSMACV. Colby wanted to expand Komer's concepts in the countryside. This became the Accelerated Pacification Campaign (APC), which emerged following the Tet Offensive of 1968. To assist the APC, the CIA established Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation (ICEX) to use South Vietnamese field operatives to collect and, if necessary, conduct operations against the Viet Cong infrastructure (VCI) forces. Colby wanted ICEX to be a Republic of Vietnam (RVN) paramilitary program and thus retain a name reflecting the South Vietnamese primary participation. The Phung Hoàng or Phoenix program emerged and provided coordination for all intelligence gathering and elimination of enemy personnel. The combination of myriad RVN paramilitary forces enabled the Phoenix program to nearly eradicate the VCI in every province, district, and hamlet in South Vietnam.

In conclusion, Thompson's basic thesis is sound; pacification's success or failure relied on the strategic knowledge of the inseparable use of conventional warfare coupled with the former was integral to Phú Yẻn's provincial military, economic, and cultural security from insurgents and corruption. Yet, like the many preceding authors' publications he criticizes as either revisionist or orthodox, *Clear, Hold, and Destroy* demonstrates by its exceeding disregard of vital individuals, programs, units, operations, and strategic perspectives dictated by American Cold War policies the polar opposite interpretation Thompson intended. Instead of an unbiased examination of pacification permitting this book to merge with a new magnanimous breed of Vietnam War writers, Thompson has joined the rank and file of historians he sought to avoid. Unfortunately, Thompson, like so many authors of so many wars and conflicts that preceded the Vietnam War, found research to defend his thesis rather than let additional sources guide his work. And lastly, Thompson seems to have forgotten during the 50 years since America's exit from the theater that it was South Vietnam's war.

•1775•

Lee W. Eysturlid, PhD

Afghanistan: A Military History from the Ancient Empires to the Great Game. By Ali Ahmad Jalali. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021, Pp. 391. $49.95, cloth.)

This volume, which was released in 2021, came at what might appear to have been the end of the long and tortured relationship between the West and Afghanistan. For that reason, its immediate relevance can be seen as diminished. However, while that might be partly true, the volume's future use as a general reference and background reader will remain. We can be grateful for the meticulous effort of Ali Ahmad Jalali, a professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University. It should be noted as well that Jalali lists himself as a "professional soldier and politician." The book is the prequel to Jalali's first book on the topic: *A Military History of Afghanistan: From the Great Game to the Global War on Terror*, published in 2017. The two books, taken together, create a necessary and complete reference point for anyone studying the topic.

Jalali literally starts at the very beginning, with what we can know about the emergence of the region, its geography, and its populations. Here, it is through the Persians that glimpses of the Afghans first emerge. From this point forward, the chapters are relatively consistent, between 30 and 40 pages, and broken down by subchapter headings. This is particularly useful as the content is often dense and, outside of the many effective descriptions of battles, can make for difficult reading. Worth mentioning as well are the numerous if somewhat simplistic maps that are essential for understanding what the author is sharing. The publisher is to be commended for including the maps that are in the book, as without them the reader would either need a historical atlas or have interrupt the reading to search for the maps.

Real military history for Jalali starts with the invasion by Alexander the Great and his efforts to subdue the area, mostly the conquest of what was then called Bactria (an ancient country lying between the mountains of the Hindu Kush and the Amu Darya), the Ferghana revolt, and the Battle of Jaxartes. The chapter on the Arab conquest between 642 and 921 CE and what the author calls the "Islamization of Afghanistan" is particularly insightful, as he breaks down the types and effectiveness of the forces and leaders involved. It is in this chapter that what the author might have called the first "great game" for the region started. In this case, while there was initially great success by the highly motivated Arab forces, they would be thrown back by Turkish tribal confederations. While Islam was in Afghanistan to stay, control would shift, at least initially, between the imperial ambitions of the Arabs and the Turks. Oddly, here the Battle of Talus (751 CE), which might really have changed the nature of the region, is given little attention.

One of the great values of this study is the fact that the author does not assume that the reader has the background knowledge to keep up. This is essential, as much of the information covered is simply not available in a single form elsewhere, at least in English. To this point, Jalali frequently stops, as the movement of time and changes require, to discuss the nature of military forces in their structure, leadership, and weaponry. For example, the reader learns that in the Ghūrid Empire's forces the most trusted troops were the *jandar*, or Turkic slave-soldiers, fighting as a combination of light and heavy cavalry. Chapters follow on the Mongol "cataclysm," the rise of Timur's empire, and then the eventual devolution of the region into tribal subsocieties. Starting in 1500, another

Dr. Lee W. Eysturlid teaches world and military history at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora. He is the author of *The Formative Influences, Theories, and Campaigns of the Archduke Carl of Austria* (2000), coedited *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History's Greatest Military Thinkers* (2013), and is currently researching the impact of ideology on weapons system choices in the 1930s.

"great game" emerged in the contest for Afghanistan as it was the meeting point for the frontiers of the Safavids, the Mughals, and the Uzbeks. The story really climaxes when the rulers of Afghanistan emerge as the leaders of powerful, if not fully modern, gunpowder forces that attacked and often came to control portions of Persia and even India, as seen in the rise of the Durrani Empire (1747–1823).

The book is perhaps too dense—it is filled with a barrage of names and terms that slow down the narrative—for a casual reading, but it will be an excellent source for anyone that chooses to make use of it. The reader should rather access the volume as a series of encyclopedic essays that illuminate each specific period. The selected bibliography is also useful as a reference, with sources given being all English-language. Anyone concerned with research or teaching that involves Afghanistan and its region should possess and reference this volume.

•1775•

Lieutenant Junior Grade Josh Hano, USN

The Pen and the Sword: The U.S. Naval Institute, 1873–2023. By A. Denis Clift. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2023. Pp. 384. $150.00, cloth.)

There is no better way to track the history of the U.S. Navy since the Civil War than to scour the pages of the U.S. Naval Institute's (USNI) *Proceedings*. This volume, marking the 150th anniversary of USNI, successfully links its creation and expansion to the modernization of the sea Services during that period. When looking deep into the history of USNI, particularly past issues of *Proceedings*, A. Denis Clift effectively relates naval institutional and intellectual history.

The structure of the book gives each decade a chapter of its own, beginning with the inception of USNI in the early 1870s. However, the first chapter briefly recounts the entire history of USNI and, like the chapters that follow, gives a great deal of space to excerpts either from *Proceedings* or other relevant sources. A letter included in the chapter demonstrates the modest origins of the group, with the intent to "organize a society of the Officers of the Navy for the purpose of discussing matters of professional interest" (p. 4).

Clift artfully captures the independent spirit of *Proceedings* from its beginning by citing an 1878 article at the start of chapter 2, in which a mere lieutenant criticizes the government for allowing the Navy to fall behind foreign powers (p. 19). Before the decade was over, *Proceedings* had held its first essay contest and moved from an annual to a quarterly publication. Examples in chapter 3 reflect the sheer breadth of topics covered by its authors, a permanent staple of *Proceedings*. Predictably, you can find Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan preaching about strategy and Commodore Stephen B. Luce writing a comparative study on military education. One also finds junior officers explaining the effect modern torpedoes have on naval tactics, the need for investment in the naval gunnery industrial base, and an analysis of the Arctic. The 1890s saw much of the same, with Theodore Roosevelt publishing an article on how past U.S. presidents had viewed the importance of a strong Navy, while a young Lieutenant Bradley A. Fiske explored the uses of electricity on board warships.

While the Naval Institute Press is most known for its publication of fiction thrillers *The Hunt for Red October* and *Flight of the Intruders*, chapter 5 discusses its early products, which were predominantly guides, textbooks, and manuals for midshipmen and junior officers. Despite the dry titles, Clift reminds the reader that these books were essential in educating a growing officer corps in an era of naval reform and technological change. Throughout the book, Clift frequently cites the work of future flag officers who published early in their careers. In chapters 6 and 8 alone, he quotes then-lieutenant commanders Harry E. Yarnell and Forrest Sherman and lieutenants Chester W. Nimitz and Hyman G. Rickover.

Proceedings was not simply a forum for policy proposals, innovations, and criticisms. It was also a vehicle for communicating real lessons from war. Chapter 7, set in the 1920s, includes articles on naval aviation, convoy escort duty, and destroyers in antisubmarine warfare in the First World War, enabling a widespread dissemination of genuine experience. The book quotes historian John B. Hattendorf who stated that this era represented, for *Proceedings*, "a new level of professional maturity with a wide range of articles on the Navy's past, present, and future" (p. 115).

Senior officers used *Proceedings* as an outlet to explain the direction they were taking the Services. Marine Corps Commandant Major General John H. Russell discussed the Fleet Marine Force in a 1936 article, articulating its role in seizing bases for the Fleet

Lt Jg Josh Hano, USN, is a student naval aviator flying with the Golden Eagles of Training Squadron 22 at Naval Air Station Kingsville, TX. He is a graduate of Yale University, a proud lifetime member of the U.S. Naval Institute, and has been published numerous times in *Proceedings*.

and its placement under the commander in chief, U.S. Fleet. Additionally, the publication gave a voice to innovative enlisted personnel like Aviation Machinist Mate First Class Charles M. Hatcher, who wrote an article about how sailors and their families banded together to create a homebuilder's cooperative and a credit union to support each other. Perhaps the most comical excerpt in the book is from future admiral Roy L. Johnson's article about his time as a flight instructor in Pensacola, Florida. He was teaching then-captains like John Sidney McCain and William F. "Bull" Halsey how to fly in order to qualify them for carrier command, challenging the idiom "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." A particularly prescient observation about naval aviation came from a *Proceedings* excerpt on the coming of jet aviation in chapter 9: "The time may not be distant when the carrier pilot will fly back to the carrier, punch a button in the cockpit, and have an electronic brain bring him aboard" (p. 147).

The post–World War II era saw USNI place itself at the forefront of strategic challenges facing the sea Services. Clift highlights instances of *Proceedings* publishing articles dealing with the highest level of policy, such as Samuel Huntington's famous paper "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy" in May 1954 and the groundbreaking January 1986 supplemental issue, which included "The Maritime Strategy," "The Amphibious Warfare Strategy," "The 600-Ship Navy," and a detailed appendix and bibliography, all written by senior leaders.

The book also shows how *Proceedings* was an effective medium to debate more sensitive subjects, such as inter-Service rivalry and the existence of the Marine Corps, as well as the integration of women and African Americans into the fleet. Further supporting its credibility as an independent voice and not simply a mouthpiece for senior leaders, was its willingness to publish a graphic essay covering the 1991 Tailhook scandal. Finally, Clift relates how remarkably visionary *Proceedings* could be by providing two excerpts of articles explaining the notable deficiencies in surface warfare officer training, years before the destroyer collisions of 2017 triggered action on the issue.

Clift underlines the increased breadth and frequency of USNI publications in response to growing membership and public interest in naval subjects. He demonstrates that USNI has been adaptive to both the demands of its members and changes in the consumption of media. Overwhelming submissions of naval history articles led to the spinoff publication *Naval History*, while support for the oral history program and the absorption of the Naval Historical Foundation has seen USNI take the lead in advocating for naval history. USNI has also gone to great lengths, as the book describes, to digitize its content, including the entire collection of *Proceedings*.

Most of Clift's sources come directly from *Proceedings*, however, he integrates other primary and secondary sources, such as oral histories, to give greater perspective. One criticism is that some of the excerpts from primary sources are too long. The reader would benefit from a greater sampling of articles from the period, enabling one to get a better sense of the era's discourse. There are several outstanding examples of debates sparked by enterprising authors, but occasionally one is left wanting for more on the influence of *Proceedings* on the fleet. Still, as this review recounts, there is no shortage of insightful and memorable anecdotes that make the book a worthy read for every navalist.

A more minor critique is that although the book includes two large sections of photographs, it would have been nice to see the various cover styles of *Proceedings*, as well as some of the photography, artwork, and advertisements over the years. This would have been a proper complement to the in-text excerpts.

The book honorably narrates the unique role USNI has played as a platform for progressive voices within the Navy, while maintaining deep institutional ties to uniformed leadership and being subject to government censors. Clift's volume beautifully tells the history of the sea Services through the pages of *Proceedings*, not as an analytical study, but through the words of the participants as events unfolded. A fun and endearing read, one is left with a deep appreciation for how the sea Services have viewed their past, present, and future during the preceding century and a half.

•1775•

Timothy Heck

The Virtuous Wehrmacht: Crafting the Myth of the German Soldier on the Eastern Front, 1941–1944. By David A. Harrisville. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021. Pp. 328. $34.95, cloth; $16.99, e-book.)

When American readers think of the eastern front, the mind's eye normally turns to frozen wastelands, high-intensity urban combat at Stalingrad, and the siege of Leningrad. While the Holocaust and concomitant death of millions of Soviet citizens, both directly and indirectly as a result of the German-led invasion, are also thought of, they tend to be held nearly separately in the mind's eye. Indeed, as Ronald Smelser and Edmund J. Davies cover in *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (2008), the myth of the "clean Wehrmacht" lives on in American perceptions of what was ultimately a war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) launched by Nazi Germany against the peoples to its east. The causes of this myth are multifaceted and, as David Harrisville points out in his masterful *The Virtuous Wehrmacht: Crafting the Myth of the German Soldier on the Eastern Front, 1941–1944*, started with the German soldiers during the war. He effectively and decisively reveals how soldiers of the German Army reacted to being active participants in the *Vernichtungskrieg*. For those interested in morality, the impact of society on the military, and how soldiers react to unethical situations, Harrisville has crafted a masterpiece. The central question of *The Virtuous Wehrmacht* is clearly laid out in the introduction.

> How did the agents of the *Vernichtungskrieg* hold on to the conviction that they remained upright men championing a just cause? How did they make peace with their role in a war that shocked the civilized world and continue to insist on their innocence even into the postwar period? (p. 11)

To answer that question, the book is broken into five chapters. The first addresses self-image and identity through an analysis of value systems within the *Wehrmacht*. The second examines soldiers' written rationalization of acute and systemic atrocities. The third explores religious motives and justifications while the fourth looks at the myth of being liberators, something that echoes to today. The final chapter looks at burial and memorialization practices used by the German Army, particularly in contrast to perceptions of their Soviet foe. A conclusion, appendix on the core data set of soldiers, extensive notes, a bibliography, and index round out the book.

In the chapter on value systems, Harrisville writes "soldiers brought up with them [into the Soviet Union] a rich assortment of ethical norms informed not only by the initial orders they received but also by military traditions, Nazi ideology, and the assumptions of German society as a whole regarding traits of the ideal man" (p. 29). Those initial orders, including what are now referred to as the Criminal Orders, were a contradictory veneer of justifications and whitewashing of conduct modern readers would instantly identify as contradicting the rules of war.[1]

Timothy Heck is supervisory historian at the Naval History and Heritage Command. A lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, he was previously a Joint historian with Marine Corps History Division's Field History Branch and the Joint History and Research Office. He is the coeditor of two volumes of *On Contested Shores: The Evolving Role of Amphibious Operations in the History of Warfare* (2020, 2024) and *Armies in Retreat: Chaos, Cohesion, and Consequences* (2023). He has written several chapters on Soviet campaigns during the Great Patriotic War for the academic press. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5270-2341

[1] The Criminal Orders consist of the "Guidelines for the Conduct of the Troops"; the "Barbarossa Decree," which authorized the execution of hostages and excused soldiers from prosecution for crimes against Soviet noncombatants; and the "Commissar Order," which instructed *Wehrmacht* troops to execute Soviet political representatives. Harrisville, *The Virtuous Wehrmacht*, 26–27.

Throughout this section, readers will find echoes to themes of small-unit cohesion, martial acculturation, and comradeship. Here, Harrisville mines the soldiers' letters back to the home front, finding a variety of conceptions of an honorable soldier surrounded by a treacherous and villainous other.

Perhaps most harrowing is the book's second chapter, which explores how soldiers reacted to the atrocities they witnessed and, in some cases, participated in. While many readers will be familiar with works such as Christopher R. Browning's *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution*, the widespread self-justification and absolution present across frontline units can be staggering. The dichotomy of perceived (and actual) Soviet brutality versus German necessity comes to the forefront here. As Harrisville writes, "The Wehrmacht's campaign on the Eastern Front was fought on a moral plane as well as a physical battlefield in the minds of soldiers and their homeland correspondents" (p. 58). Rationalizing their actions, German soldiers found fertile language in propaganda and the language of their higher-ups about the "military necessity" of their crimes (p. 77).

The book's third and fourth chapters, about religious justifications and self-perception as liberators, further the arguments that interconnected social and cultural forces were at work in how German soldiers reacted to their roles in the Soviet Union. The German Army was there to provide "salvation from Bolshevism" and its godless beliefs (p. 99). Coupled with beliefs of a religious duty was a more political necessity: liberation from the yoke of Stalin, especially for non-Russian European ethnic groups. This political belief was not without some initial confirmation, as some Soviet citizens, including the recently annexed Baltics, "hoped that the Germans would bring with them a chance for economic renewal and a measure of political autonomy after two decades under a Stalinist regime that had been deeply unpopular in many areas" (p. 199). Liberation in the eyes of the Germans extended beyond political and economic shifts, which ultimately proved to be illusory for their new subjects but also cultural, as the Germans at first attempted to protect then actively plundered art and cultural objects (pp. 162–63).

The book's final chapter on burial and commemoration practices also holds poignancy and modern relevancy as discussions of what and how to commemorate the fallen or politically ambiguous wars is discussed.[2] While the Germans were victorious and the front's rear areas stable, German troops were buried in massive cemeteries with military honors not unlike those we practice today. This practice, with its incumbent moralism and justification for sacrifice, was "increasingly undermined by the realities of a war of attrition that made life a living hell for millions who manned the bunkers of the Eastern Front" (p. 191). As more Germans went missing and survival rather than victory became a more realistic hope, the narrative changed. With increasing casualty rates, the number of older veterans of the first winter in the Soviet Union dwindled, increasingly isolating soldiers from each other as replacements flowed in and out of units, "prompting some to question whether they were making a meaningful sacrifice after all and whether the death of so many comrades was truly necessary" (p. 193). This, in turn, helped frame postwar narratives as victims instead of persecutors.

Harrisville's methodology is also worth comment. Using a collection of more than 2,000 letters written by 30 rank-and-file soldiers during the war back to their families and friends, he shows the strategies the common soldier or junior officer used "to reconcile himself to participation in a war of unprecedented criminality" (p. 2). While soldiers might have thought themselves honorable, a language echoed in the postwar era, Harrisville reveals this was a constructed reality for many of its participants, who relied on a variety of means by which to validate and justify their actions and those of the German state. Soldiers "typically harbored a much different understanding of themselves, their institution, and the war they were waging" (p. 5). By using contemporary letters that were transited through the German postal

[2] See, for example, the recent efforts to create a Global War on Terrorism memorial in Washington, DC. "Global War on Terrorism Memorial," National Capital Planning Commission, 6 April 2023.

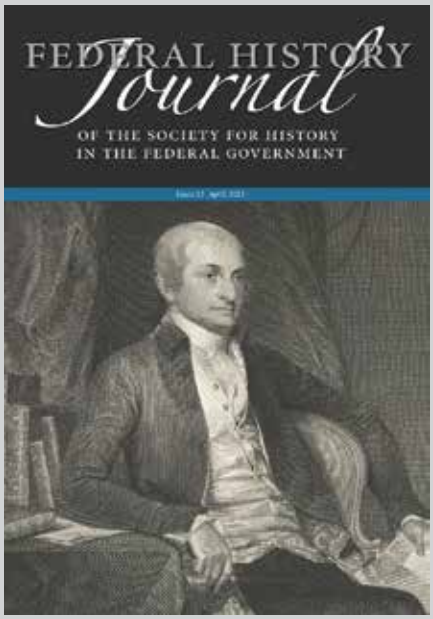
system during the war, Harrisville also reveals that knowledge of the brutalities in the East was much wider than just among the participating units. By selecting largely frontline troops who served along the entire front in a variety of roles, he strengthens his argument that the methods and justifications were not isolated cases in some sectors or units but rather a wider and willingly self-crafted narrative enabled by the *Wehrmacht*'s leadership.

Harrisville writes: "From the moment it began, the war on the Eastern Front witnessed a level of criminal violence unmatched by any previous campaign" (p. 57). From that basis, Harrisville forces us to examine the self-justifications, socially constructed myths, and cultural amnesia present in our perceptions of the *Wehrmacht*'s fight against the Soviet Union, its army, and its peoples. Beautifully written, hardly a page goes by without a revelation or insight that will cause modern leaders to think about how we train, educate, and acculturate our forces to respect the laws of war while participating in combat.

•1775•

FEDERAL HISTORY

Journal of the Society for History in the Federal Government (www.shfg.org)



Federal History features scholarship on all aspects of the history and operations of the federal government, and of critical historical interactions between American society and the government, including the U.S. military, 1776 to the present.

Published annually online and in print (to members).

Issues available at *http://www.shfg.org/Federal-History-Journal-Archive*

Contact: *federalhistory@gmail.com*

Major Bobby Jorgensen, USMCR

The Rise and Fall of an Officer Corps: The Republic of China Military, 1942–1955. By Eric Setzekorn. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. 256. $34.95, cloth; $21.95, paperback; $29.95, e-book.)

The Peace of Westphalia helped create and normalize the concept of sovereign states maintaining a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within their borders. The international system that emerged from this period sought to concentrate armed power in the hands of militaries responsible to their nations. Somewhat implicit underneath this concept was the recognition that governments in power needed to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens and subjects to minimize incentives for the emergence of competing internal power centers. The United States eventually provided perhaps the purest form of this idealized system, with a standing military beholden solely to the defense of the country's founding documents and ideals and to serving that end regardless of the ruling party in power.

While this ideal was met with varying degrees of success in the West during the ensuing centuries, the concept did not take as firm a hold in East Asia. The regional behemoth, China, has virtually no tradition of an apolitical military wielding its monopoly on legitimate violence on behalf of the nation. Indeed, the People's Republic of China currently stands out as the world's only major military power whose armed forces serve the ruling party and not the state. Eric Setzekorn's *The Rise and Fall of an Officer Corps* explores the tradition of apolitical military professionalism within the context of modern Chinese history in an effort to determine why the tradition of a professionalized military found such shallow footing in that country. He does so by looking at the Republic of China (ROC, modern day Taiwan) and its Kuomintang Party (KMT) and tracing the ways in which the party's relationship with the ROC military evolved over time, often in inverse correlation to the KMT's grip on power. Setzekorn ultimately seeks to show that the 10–15 years immediately surrounding World War II saw the apolitical military tradition nearly take root within the ROC as that country's military leveraged close ties to the American military to implement a number of reforms aimed at professionalizing the ROC's officer corps, before setbacks conspired to push the emergence of a truly national army out of reach for the remainder of the century.

Setzekorn sets the stage by walking the reader through much of modern Chinese history, beginning with the Qing Dynasty. After reaching its geographical zenith, the dynasty began consolidating its power, but this ushered in a series of organizational issues for the military. The armed forces during the latter part of the Qing Dynasty were primarily divided between a set of constabulary forces focused on internal security within China's borders and a more traditional military whose function was to defend the state against external threats. The prolonged period of peace that accompanied the dynasty's emergence as the regional hegemon led to the stagnation of much of the military's best forces. Faced with a lack of threats against which to exercise and train, military units aligned largely along personality and ethnic lines, valuing physical prowess more than tactical acumen and military experience. A sluggish response to an uprising centered around Taiping in 1850 demonstrated the atrophy that had occurred within the military and provided the impetus for evolutionary change. The years following the Taiping rebellion saw the emergence of regionally based military units founded by Han Chinese elites to provide better protection than that af-

Bobby Jorgensen is a major in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. A combat engineer officer by training, he is currently serving as a field historian with the Marine Corps History Division. In his civilian career, he works in the financial services industry.

forded by the centralized Qing forces. The state's poor showing during the 1894–95 Sino-Japanese War furthered the drive for military reform and the years following that war's conclusion saw the emergence of a more robust military education system, including war colleges and the founding of military journals, all designed to help professionalize the officer corps. Much of the professionalizing officer cadre came from the ethnically Han formations, however, and this eventually came to be seen as a threat to the ethnically Manchu ruling dynasty. The Qing eventually sought to reassert stronger control over the military, subserving it more to protection of the dynasty. The ensuing tension between the ruling elites and the professionalizing military proved irreconcilable and in 1912 the Qing Dynasty fell, due at least partially to uprisings supported by newly trained military officers.

What followed was a period of chaos defined by a breakdown in central governing and the emergence of regional fiefdoms ruled by warlords. The Kuomintang Party emerged from the chaos and began attempting to restore order to the state. Styling itself as a revolutionary party, the KMT followed the lead set by the Red Army and established a military dedicated to protecting the party, which would by extension protect the state as the party was to be the savior of the state. The KMT continued attempts to professionalize the officer corps within its party army, establishing a series of officer schools, not least of which was the Whampoa Academy. From the party's point of view these schools not only had the benefit of making better military officers, but they also afforded the party an opportunity to better indoctrinate those same officers in the party's teachings and ideology. The KMT also at this time implemented a parallel political officer cadre within the military alongside the officer corps. In the absence of a strong central government, the KMT's political cadre helped establish order in the regions that the party took over, but the political officers were also emplaced to guard against the reemergence of any warlords from within the party army's ranks. By the late 1920s, the KMT had vanquished the major warlord factions and established itself as China's national government. Along with this came international recognition of the KMT as the ruling party and the KMT used this growing international clout to further professionalize its military through partnership with, and training by, the German military. The KMT also sought to further legitimize itself in the eyes of the Chinese people. To this end, the party downplayed party obedience in favor of patriotism, a change in direction that helped the military officer corps begin seeing itself as a professional institution serving the people rather than the party.

The explosion of World War II helped the Chinese military make its greatest strides in terms of professionalization. Seeing the Chinese front as a cost-effective way to attrite Japanese forces, the American military implemented a robust advisory mission to the KMT's nationalist government. The training and resources the Americans poured into the ROC's military far exceeded previous assistance from Germany and Russia and helped begin molding the Chinese military into a modern force with a nascent combined arms capability. The exigences of war further elevated the military officer corps' influence over that of the political officer cadre, and by the time Japan was defeated the Chinese military had a large crop of military officers who saw their calling as that of a traditional, professional military serving the state rather than a party. The robust American training and aid system ended with the conclusion of the war, but this officer corps largely spent the remainder of the 1940s focused on continuing to develop the Chinese military into a great power military on par with those of the other primary victorious Allies. Postwar professional discourse and publications focused almost exclusively on large scale maneuver, strategic competition, and the defeat of external threats, primarily the Soviet Union. Almost entirely absent was any discussion or consideration of low-intensity warfare or pacification operations. The nationalist government had not fully consolidated power within China, however, and not long after the conclusion of World War II the Chinese Civil War broke out as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) sought to drive the KMT from power. Styling themselves as apolitical warriors, the officer corps was unprepared for the ensuing civil war, a condition that

can perhaps be at least partially explained by those officers' dedication to service of the state rather than the party.

Regardless of the exact linkages, by 1949 the KMT had been driven from the mainland and forced into exile on Taiwan. The KMT blamed its fall from power at least partially on the military's lack of dedication to the party, and it began rejuvenating the political officer cadre to bring the military back in line with the defense of the party. Coincident with this exile from the mainland, the Americans began reengaging with the nationalist government to help shore it up against further communist expansion. This increase in American government and military support paradoxically led the KMT to further politicize the ROC military as the need for an independent, world class military to defend Taiwan decreased due to formal American pledges of military backing and support. Thus, by the mid-1950s the KMT had begun turning the ROC military back into a party army focused on internal surveillance and party protection rather than external defense and state protection. This newfound alignment would remain in place through the end of the century.

Setzekorn does a very good job walking the reader through all of this, and his account is very heavily sourced from both Chinese and English language sources. Indeed, the bibliography comes in at 25 pages and includes a nice blend of oral histories, primary source documents, and scholarly works. This deep sourcing shines throughout the narrative, and the reader is left in no doubt as to Setzekorn's mastery of the material and the authority with which he writes. The book is logically organized and chronologically walks the reader through developments in the Chinese military as the author makes the case for his thesis. The book does have a couple of small shortcomings, however, primarily centered around broader contextual issues. Absent from the book is an overview of Chinese power transitions following the fall of the Qing Dynasty. References are made to the government moving to Nanking, and the emergence of the Second United Front, for example, but the reader is not given an explanation as to what these events were and how they fit into the nationalist government's emergence. The reader would also benefit from an aside explaining the force structure of the nationalist army, to better understand the author's references to "all three services." The reader is also left with unanswered questions as to why a military clearly dedicated to professionalization and improvement was so handily defeated by the CCP. While the object of the book is not to provide a thorough history of the Chinese Civil War, some background on the conflict would help the reader understand what transpired to see the nationalist government exiled to Taiwan and how the actions of the ROC military leadership in the years preceding the conflict contributed to their battlefield failures when faced with a civil war. Left unexplored is an examination of any differences in outlook and training between the CCP military and the ROC military that led to such a resounding defeat of the latter. Nevertheless, the book is clearly focused throughout, and the reader walks away with a sound understanding of the evolution of the ROC military leadership throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

The Rise and Fall of an Officer Corps is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in better understanding how military cultures emerge and evolve over time. While most military history books focus on battle tactics, technology, and strategy, Setzekorn explores the organization and how the competing priorities of state and party interacted over time to shape the ROC military. This book is also a valuable addition to the study of the military advisory mission. Setzekorn dives deep into how the American advising mission structured itself and how the ebb and flow of that structure corresponded to America's policy aims in relation to the Republic of China. By focusing on these two relatively underrepresented segments of military history, Setzekorn has written a valuable book, and serious students of East Asia and military organizations would do well to pick it up.

•1775•

Tamala Malerk, PhD

Managing Sex in the U.S. Military: Gender, Identity, and Behavior. Edited by Beth Bailey, Alesha E. Doan, Shannon Portillo, and Karon Dixon Vuic. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. Pp. 364. $99.00, cloth; $30.00, paperback, e-book.)

In *Managing Sex in the U.S. Military*, Beth Bailey et al. demonstrate "how the military as an institution has impacted social understandings of sex, sexuality, and gender equity in the United States" through the examples throughout the text of how "sex—both the act and the physiological differences between women and men—appears most frequently as a problem to be managed" (pp. 9, 14) by the military. Thirteen scholars contributed to this text that takes the reader primarily from World War I, in which the U.S. Army "lost seven million days of active duty during the war to sexually transmitted infections," to the present era (p. 1).

Reviewing a book written by so many contributors provides the opportunity for the reader to engage with a variety of voices and styles. To create cohesion behind the collection, the monograph is divided into 12 chapters separated by 5 parts between the introduction and afterword. By dividing the text into five parts, the contributors can better explore the nuances of the variety of interpretations of sex, sexuality, gender, and identity. The text presents information chronologically in each chapter. Through this chronological representation, it demonstrates how the needs of the armed Services changed as the demographics of those who served also changed.

The text uses information from a variety of sources, primarily monographs, journal articles, and newspapers. Where this differs is in chapter 12, " 'The Juice Ain't Worth the Squeeze': Resisting Gender Integration in Special Forces" by Alesha E. Doan and Shannon Portillo. Doan and Portillo spent from 2013 to 2014 collecting data about women's role in the Special Forces from a variety of focus groups, which provides most of the information for the chapter.

The book opens with a brief introduction explaining the set-up of the collection as well as the history of different treatments of sex by the military. For example, "For most of military history, commanders considered sex to be a matter of morale for male soldiers: they either needed sex or they deserved it as a reward. . . . Yet the military has never granted women the same allowance" (p. 6). This begins a trend of themes seen throughout the book: respectability, agency and self-control, masculinity and femininity, as well as the dichotomy of the military producing progressive policies against a racist and sexist reality. An example of this dichotomy is that women were finally allowed in combat positions in 2015, yet they are uniquely injured in these positions because they are forced to wear ill-fitting body armor designed for male bodies (p. 335).

Part one, "Behavior," contains three chapters that chronically explore 1898–1970s: "The U.S. Army's Management of Sexuality at Home and Abroad, 1898–1940," "Compensation, Commerce and Conjugality: Managing Male Heterosexuality in the U.S. Military from World War II to the War on Terror," and " 'A Higher Morale Character': Respectability and Women's Army Corps." Throughout these three chapters, there is a lack of agency among the soldiers allowed by the commanding officers. In the early twentieth century, foreign women were treated as "expendable" during wartime (p. 51). This was under the assumption from commanders that men would sexually assault women if denied access to sexual activity—as if men as a whole did not have the self-control to refrain from illicit activities. This ties into the theme of respect-

Dr. Tamala Malerk is an independent scholar and professional writer and editor. Her research interests include imperial Britain, modern Europe, women and gender, and public history.

ability where the Women's Army Corps maintained "markedly low rates of venereal infection" compared to the aforementioned seven million lost active duty days by men (p. 80). Despite the low venereal infections among women during World War II, rumors circulated that "90% of WAACs had been shown to be prostitutes" (p. 82). Women's mere presence challenged and sometimes still challenges the social acceptances of masculinity and femininity and vicious rumors and treatment were the price for bucking social norms.

Part two, "Family and Reproduction," contains two chapters: " 'We Recruit Individuals but Retain Families': Managing Marriage and Family in the All-Volunteer Force, 1973–2001" and "Reproduction in Combat Boots." These chapters introduce readers to the shift to the all-volunteer force in the military. With the move to an all-volunteer force, the military had to continue to transition a force away from mostly single (and seemingly heterosexual) men to married men and women with children. Again, throughout these chapters, the socially accepted definitions of masculinity and femininity are challenged as the armed forces and public contend with the idea of mothers going to war.

Part three, "Orientation and Identity," contains two chapters: "A Comparative Analysis of the Military Bans on Openly Serving Gays, Lesbians, and Transgender Personnel" and "Formal Regulation, Cultural Enforcement: Managing Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression in the U.S. Military." The contributors explore the ideas of sexuality and identity dating back to the Revolutionary War era. Historically, merely fighting as a servicemember was the personification of masculinity. When adding women to the mix, the ideas of gender and social norms became blurred. What was more masculine than fighting in wars? Male soldiers saw the addition of women as an act "to feminize the force" (p. 183). The open admission of gay and transsexual people also challenged the heteronormative male tradition of the armed forces. These chapters further explore agency and self-control among servicemembers. When arguments surrounding the 1990s "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy began, the Senate Armed Services Committee argued that allowing gay and lesbian people to serve in the armed forces "would compromise unit cohesion and military readiness" despite these individuals already serving (p. 148).

Part four, "Sexual Assault and Prevention," contains two chapters: "Problematic Policies and Far-Reaching Consequences: Historicizing Sexual Violence in the U.S. Military" and "Managing Harassment and Assault in the Contemporary U.S. Military." Identity, masculinity, sexuality, and race play huge roles in these chapters. Through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, servicemembers used rape as a form of punishment and reward. Contributors particularly noted the assaults of indigenous women during the Indian Wars, "the sexual exploitation and abuse by U.S. troops" in World War II, and the "Allied Nations' failure to prosecute the Japanese military's systemic sexual abuse of Asian women" (pp. 204–5). Throughout these two chapters, the reader not only learns about the abuse perpetuated by servicemembers but also about the assault and rape experiences of servicemembers. Gender and identity played huge roles in this; for example, male victims were left "without legal recourse until 1992" because rape was defined as a man "engaging in 'an act of sexual intercourse with a female not his wife, by force and without her consent' " (pp. 206–7). Masculinity and identity are prominent themes throughout these chapters as well. One of the biggest obstacles to gender integration into the Service academies and armed forces in the 1970s was "male prejudice against women" (p. 225). It was not that women could not perform the same tasks as men; it was just assumed they could not—and should not.

Part five, "Gender, Sexuality, and Combat" contains three chapters: "Combat Exclusion Policies and the Management of Gender Difference in the U.S. Military," "Brother in Arms? Combat, Masculinity, and Change in the Twenty-First-Century American Military," and " 'The Juice Ain't Worth the Squeeze': Resisting Gender Integration in Special Forces." The first two chapters here explore the presence of women in combat situations despite the combat ban not being lifted until 2015. As previously mentioned, where this part differs from the rest of the text is the last

chapter about the Special Forces. The authors conducted 27 focus groups of 198 participants; 23 of the focus groups were men, and all of the focus groups lasted about two hours. While this methodology differed from the preceding 11 chapters, it flowed well with the text because the previous chapters acted as context to interpret the results of these focus groups. The information provided echoed a lot of the sentiments and gender stereotypes documented throughout the text: women should not integrate because of men's preconceptions and beliefs rather than because of any solid proof.

The book ends with a short afterword describing how "managing sex" is still a primary concern for the armed forces and still remains unresolved. Something in the armed forces may change in policy or paper, such as the integration of women, gay people, and transgender people into the ranks. Yet, these changes are "rarely linear . . . often inconsistent . . . [and] contradictory" (p. 336). Even today, trans servicemembers find themselves caught up in the potential policy changes to their ability to serve (pp. 335–36). Due to the public nature of military policy and the "symbolic weight" of military service in American society, these changes, the arguments around them, and the reactions to them also reflect society as a whole (p. 336).

Those with an interest in military history, women and gender studies, and queer history, will be most drawn to this text. However, because the book delves into the present era, those interested in contemporary military experiences will also be interested in this text. Prior knowledge of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and Women's Army Corps would be beneficial but is not necessary to read this text.

•1775•

Rich Myrick, PhD

Washington's Marines: The Origins of the Corps and the American Revolution, 1775–1777. By Jason Q. Bohm. (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2023. Pp. 360. $34.95, cloth.)

Jason Bohm's *Washington's Marines: The Origins of the Corps and the American Revolution, 1775–1777* is a fascinating exploration of the origins of the Marine Corps, bringing a fresh perspective and broad context to the popular narrative of Samuel Nicholas and the founding of the Corps at Philadelphia's Tun Tavern in 1775. To be sure, Nicholas and Tun Tavern have key roles, but what makes this work an especially enlightening and welcome addition to the historiography of the Marine Corps is how the stories of individuals are used to reconstruct the surprisingly varied and consequential employment of the newly formed Marine units at sea and on land during the war for American independence. Building on the earlier historical scholarship of William Stryker, Charles Smith, and David Hackett Fisher, Bohm (a retired Marine Corps major general) asserts that while the first American Marines certainly performed the expected functions on board ships and in amphibious operations, they also augmented state militias and units of the Continental Army, served in key roles in the employment of artillery, and made vital contributions throughout George Washington's successful campaign in the Delaware Valley in late 1776 and early 1777. Tying these various threads together, the underlying theme of *Washington's Marines* is how the Marines and the young nation they represented and defended were tied inextricably together in their origins and ethos. Bohm's great achievement is in weaving together a vivid narrative of the conflict with these larger issues of loyalty, sacrifice, and national identity.

Washington's Marines is structured as 10 chapters grouped into two primary sections derived from analytical themes linked to the origins of the war as well as the formation and employment of Marine units. Framing his exposition with a prologue and an epilogue, Bohm grounds his study first and foremost in the stories of the individuals who became the nation's first Marines, which sets the tone for the book. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the purpose of Marines during the late eighteenth century, while chapter 2 outlines the origins of the American Revolution. Chapters 3 through 5 chart the course of the war from initial actions around Boston in 1775 to the critical operational setbacks in New York in 1776. However, the core of the book and the focus of Bohm's narrative are chapters 6 through 10, which form a skillfully constructed narrative focused ultimately on Washington's successes in the Delaware Valley campaign, beginning at Trenton in December 1776 and culminating at Princeton in 1777. Bohm's primary and secondary sources are extensive and varied, but the core of his research and his central assertions are derived from accounts of the war written within memory of the event. The book centers on the events of the war, but the epilogue extends the scope through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, concluding in the present day.

This work has three notable strengths that distinguish it from earlier works and make it a significant addition to the historiography of the Marine Corps. First, Bohm has used a rich store of primary sources, which he notes are much more accessible than they were for his predecessors due to the advent of digitized records. With these sources, he is able to accomplish two important tasks. To great effect, he explores historical events through the recollections of those who actually served, ably matching a variety of sources with events in the war. The resulting descriptions of combat and the operational thinking that produced it are a highlight of the work. Next, and

Dr. Rich Myrick, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel, is a James C. Carey Research Fellow with the Department of History at Kansas State University, Manhattan. His research interests include early modern and modern Europe, and military history.

most critically to the overall narrative, Bohm uses his sources to show that the Marine Corps during the War of Independence was not just a small, ship-based force of congressionally mandated Continentals, but rather an amalgam of Continental Marines, state Marines, and privateers, often augmented by army personnel. As such, Washington's Marines were not the product of a monolithic organization with limited aims, but an ad hoc group of innovative volunteers, reflecting the ethos and culture of the nation they were fighting to establish.

The second strength of the book is Bohm's emphasis on the flexibility and adaptability of George Washington's mixed-source Marine Corps. As evidenced by the book's title, these were *Washington's Marines*, formed largely due to the Continental military's need for a force that could fight from ships or on land. Indeed, Bohm relates the remarkable story of a group of Marines formed by Washington from within the Continental Army, which despite some early successes was most important in proving the need for a true Corps of Marines rather than repurposed soldiers. Once established in 1775, the Continental Marines were employed in naval operations and in the defense of Philadelphia from waterborne attack, but the heart of the book is a detailed narrative of Marine contributions to series of morale-boosting victories by Washington's forces in the winter of 1776–77. Bohm shows how Continental and state Marines played small but key roles as ground troops alongside Pennsylvania militia at the Battles of Trenton, Assunpink Creek, and Princeton. Perhaps most surprisingly, Marines were also highly successful when assigned to employ artillery for the Continental Army, reflecting their experience operating ship-board cannon. Bohm makes the point that from the beginning of their existence, American Marines were, in effect, joint operators, adaptable to missions at sea with the Navy and on land with the Army.

The third strength of Bohm's work and the most compelling beyond the expected focus on tactical and operational aspects of campaigns is his exposition of the parallel origins of the Marine Corps and the American republic it was established to defend. Both were born of necessity in the War of Independence, and both reflected the nation from which they came. Neither were fully formed when founded, and a certain amount of trial and error was required before they were formally established as effective institutions. Although subtly presented, this theme is the core continuity in *Washington's Marines*, and Bohm's emphasis on this idea helps tie the various individual and unit narratives together into a comprehensive whole.

Major General Bohm has produced a valuable addition to the historiography of the Marine Corps—and the United States. Presented in accessible prose, *Washington's Marines* will appeal to general audiences, but as a work of serious scholarship it will also be of interest to military historians and students. Finally, Bohm has also opened new avenues for scholarly research and debate concerning the interoperability of forces within the Continental military, and as such it is a significant contribution to the field. This work is highly recommended.

•1775•

Suzanne Pool-Camp

My Darling Boys: A Family at War, 1941–1947. By Fred H. Allison. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2023. Pp. 336. $34.95, cloth.)

This amazing story of the of the author's own family and his discovery of the letters and wartime writings of his uncles will captivate you from the beginning. Like so many sons and daughters of war veterans, Allison remained unaware of his father's and uncles' experiences during 1941–47. He vividly describes the moment of discovering this part of his family's past, when he opened an old trunk in the garage: "As the lid came open, a musty smell spilled out," and before his eyes were old military documents, flight training and combat records. For Allison, whose career as a U.S. Marine Corps aviator and then as an oral historian with the Marine Corps History Division, this must have seemed like discovering the key to a personal family archive.

An apple orchard and farmland near Roswell, New Mexico, was the homestead for the Allison family. After the death of their father, and the remarriage of their mother to Wiley Grizzle, the three brothers—Gerald, Harold, and Oscar—soon had four more stepsiblings. One of these was Wiley Grizzle "Junior" who became a North American P-51 Mustang fighter pilot and lost his life in a dogfight with a swarm of German *Luftwaffe*. Allison's father Harold also trained to become a North American B-25 Mitchell copilot, but missed out on much of the war due to surgery and time needed for recovery. Oscar became a Consolidated B-24 Liberator top turret gunner and a flight engineer. His handwritten memoir of his war experiences forms the core of much of Allison's book. Allison deftly weaves the setting of his uncle's story into the larger picture of the war and letters from his family on the home front. The reader feels the anxiety of those waiting for letters from Oscar and Wiley, as well as the homesickness of the brothers for their loved ones at home.

The superb storytelling and colorful details related by Oscar can be appreciated in just one example from his account of bailing out of a crashing B-24 plane over Italy: "All the things I'd heard about bailing out didn't happen to me." Instead, he enjoyed the "quietness of free fall and the gentleness of floating down under that beautiful white nylon canopy that was like a huge, inverted magnolia blossom." He could see the rolling hills and forest below, but soon he landed "in the middle of a steep rooftop covered with about six inches of snow, slid down the side and landed softly in a deep drift of snow beside the house" (p. 106). And the emotional reaction by his mother to the news that Oscar was a POW emanates from the note she wrote to relatives: "I got good news today about my darling boy. A telegram saying he's a German prisoner. God that was good news. . . . I just knew he wasn't dead" (p. 124).

This book is another treasure to add to the primary source material for World War II, especially as now, 79 years later, few memoirs and letters are being discovered and published. Not only historians will value Allison's work but also any American who appreciates reading about the bravery of men and women who sacrificed themselves for the country.

•1775•

Suzanne Pool-Camp is a legal and military historian and holds a juris doctor degree. She lives in Fredericksburg, VA, with her husband Col Richard Camp, USMC (Ret).

Phil W. Reynolds, PhD

Containing History: How Cold War History Explains US-Russia Relations. By Stephen P. Friot. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2023. Pp. 432. $35.95, cloth; $29.95, e-book.)

Stephen Friot is a master storyteller with an archivist's grip on Cold War history. In a meticulously researched narrative that spans the years from 1945 to 1991, the author touches on nearly every facet of the intricate statecraft practiced by both the West and the Soviet bloc. Along the way, Friot provides an interesting interpretation—an angle of view—to the complex problems of Cold War history.

There have been many histories of the Cold War. Indeed, the breadth of the Cold War encompasses a virtual paradigm of human existence. One of the first problems a historian faces when undertaking such a study is determining a general approach to the subject: A U.S. history, a history of the Soviet Union, economic history, or a telling of historical materialism, just to name a few. We have all waded through those weighty tomes, creaky yellow with disuse, best for propping up the bedside lamp perhaps. In these other histories of the Cold War, the academic researcher replaces readability by smothering layer upon layer of dross until perspective is like butter scraped over too much bread: thin. In a refreshing return to simplicity, Friot adopts the dialectic method in which he presents the Western then the Soviet interpretations of the same event. That simplicity allows the reader to linger on subjects and explore in their own way the impact of history.

Friot's thesis is that the Soviet actions during World War II and in the conferences during and immediately after were meant to extend the borders of Soviet control, if not the Soviet Union's physical borders. The upshot was that the states of the near abroad could be controlled and the threat of invasion drastically reduced by reducing the chances that a neighboring state would be taken over by an unfriendly regime. This was, after all, the Soviet Union, which believed capitalist countries were an inimitable threat, being marionettes of the international capitalist system. A basic tenet of Marxism was that capitalism was the basis of conflict, thus making coexistence impossible and conflict inevitable. The author makes an adequate case that Stalin believed that the Red Army had to extend as far west as possible to provide the needed security to install friendly, i.e., communist, political regimes. If the West would invade from further France or West Germany, the cushion of the Warsaw Pact countries would absorb the destruction.

While there is the threat of being too reductionist in Friot's explanations, at least he does not fall into the trap of legitimizing the horror of the Soviet methods of control to shock and sell books. Still, the Cold War was an ideological project of the political and cultural elites in the West as much as in the Kremlin's Cominform. As Friot points out, after Nikita Khrushchev's drunken boast that "we will bury you," American defense contractors made billions of dollars from the Cold War (p. 219). This becomes important to Friot later, as he recounts how history-made-historiography can be weaponized into power.

Where Friot shines is in his narrative of the early Cold War. Indeed, it may be the best bit of a book full of good bits. Going into the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, the author concludes that the Americans and British did not appease Joseph Stalin by giving him Eastern Europe. Stalin already had Eastern Europe with dozens of Red Army divisions sitting there (p. 54). Stalin was not about to give up that land. Doing so would have seriously weakened his position in

Dr. Phil W. Reynolds is a professor of security cooperation at the Defense Security Cooperation University in Arlington, VA. He is author of *Ouroboros: Understanding the War Machine of Liberalism* (2019). The views expressed in this review are those solely of the author and do not reflect the policy or views of the Defense Security Cooperation University, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, or Department of Defense. https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9899-7636

the Kremlin. It is in this explanation of the constraints facing Stalin that really establishes Friot's insistence that it was racial memory that drove Russian actions during the Cold War.

The reader would have been superbly served by Friot's dialectic approach if the author had provided more depth to the economic and technological prism of the two systems. This could have provided a useful jumping-off point to a survey of possible futures from Russia. While the author squarely locates his analysis in the ideological spectrum, he spends little time discussing how ideology used economics and technology to export itself to the then-Third World, which was where the real battle for supremacy was playing out. Internally, both countries attempted social engineering and massive exploitation of national resources, but it was, particularly toward the end, the harnessing of technology and the concomitant economic underpinnings were seen as exemplars of socialism or freedom. What the author does capture is the explosion of oligarchical, explicit capitalism of the petro-state that emerged from the Soviet Union (p. 345). This dependence on the sale of oil and gas at high prices might well explain the courtship of Vladimir Putin's Kremlin to the OPEC, the creation of the OPEC+ gang in 2016, and the new bipolar world that has emerged since. Certainly, the sale of oil and gas gave the Kremlin a veneer of military sustainability that encouraged expansionism in the Caucasus and Ukraine. However, without a deep background in technological innovation, the Russian military appears no nimbler than its World War II predecessor and simply smashes everything in its path. To that end, it is easy to see how the Cold War is still shaping today.

Containing History's weakness is its abrupt end in 1991. Russian psychology is endlessly fascinating, and Friot has a substantial head of steam that could have paid dividends in a description of the events since Boris Yeltsin stood on a tank in 1991. Since then, Russia has been obsessed with rebuilding its near abroad as a cushion against invasion, however bizarre the idea may seem to Westerners. The author uncovers the connection between the purpose of the near-abroad and Russian nationalism and jettisons the well-worn euphemisms about revanchist empire building. As early as 1992, observers had noted that championing the rights of Russian speakers in now-foreign states "had become a prerequisite for almost all shades of political opinion in Russia" (p. 329). This is important fodder for the propaganda mill that is the Kremlin, as much as it was for the Nazis in the 1930s. It is a solid plank in the effort to delegitimize Ukraine as a separate culture with its own language. The author would have done well to link the Holodomor to the current Russian war in Ukraine. The collectivization of farms in eastern Ukraine starved millions of ethnic Ukrainians to death, a vacuum that was conveniently filled by ethnic Russians moving in.[1] Another clear case of how the Cold War is still shaping today, as Russia declared that the ethnic Russians in the eastern oblasts of Ukraine were oppressed and desired union with the motherland.

The world is now 30 years on from the end of the Soviet Union. This is a grand reference tool for those who desire introduction to the period and it provides excellent sources for those inclined to further study. The dilettanti may not remember the burden of that ceaseless threat, the gray feeling, the drag on life that was the missile gap, Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, or the Soviet support to nasty little wars around the world, but Friot remembers. The reader can now too.

•1775•

[1] Olesia Rosovyk, "Resettlement Processes in the Ukrainian SSR during the Holodomor (1932–1934)," *Communist and Post Communist Studies* 53, no. 1 (2020): 80–99.

Charles Nathan Swope

How to Fight a War. By Mike Martin. (London, UK: Hurst, 2023. Pp. 280. $27.85, cloth; $21.22, paperback.)

In *How to Fight a War*, Mike Martin resolves to guide nations to "arrive at durable strategic answers to the pressing geopolitical questions of the day quicker and more efficiently" (p. 3). Martin, who became a commissioned officer of the British Army prior to earning his PhD in war studies and becoming a senior visiting fellow at King's College London, introduces his council in three parts: intangible fundamentals, tangible capabilities, and the art of using lethal violence. While the official publishing date of this new book was congruent with the author's major political campaign for a public legislative office, the manuscript appears nonpartisan.

From oceans to the moon, the dynamics of warfare reoccur in each campaign, at each level, as war is timeless; thus, the author cites premier battles from world history to validate a great deal of universal wisdom. New and future heads of state who read this will learn generalship while strategically viewing their nation's military with regard to how to become a hegemony.

With hundreds of billions of dollars each year, the United States' military dominance provides the awesome level of national security, global stability, and capabilities needed in planning and realizing its interests. Yet, the author explains that even the largest nation with the best and most versatile army in the world must have a real and achievable strategy set by its leaders. War is, after all, just an instrument of politics. In part one, this aged rule agrees with the author's view on strategy or generalship as Martin explains, intelligence, doctrines of logistics, morale, and training. He states that winning wars takes place in the mind. Also, a great victory will have everything to do with logistics. Take a 155-millimeter Howitzer, to start: logistically, a battery will require two shipping containers, per hour, of ammunition to operate at a moderate rate of support. Furthermore, great leaders help soldiers navigate moral ambiguity, as good morale makes them believe they can achieve anything. Governments must have the support of citizens to achieve strategic ambitions that good morale yields. Citizens also must have developed complete support for the armed forces to achieve success. All of it is held together in training.

Part two accounts for the author's philosophies of investment in portfolios of land, sea, air, space, cyber, and information domain capabilities. Martin's first comment is that land, with regard to combat, has primacy far superior to all domains. In a tangible sense, only land is where all wars will be won; having, in the perfect scenario, mechanized infantry, artillery, and tanks "to make a highly effective triad," as these three capabilities are grouped together in the combined arms formations of battle groups (p. 103). Thus, all domain capabilities, to include space and nuclear, exist to support ground activities. Further, he writes, "Who controls the global maritime space is a vital factor as you consider your plans for war" (p. 120). The author acknowledges that the only undisputed blue-water navy is the U.S. Navy, which launches and sustains indefinite maritime operations anywhere on the planet. The U.S. Marine Corps has the exclusivity in breadth plus depth of capabilities required to conduct even a medium amphibious operation.

After explaining the full spectrum of capabilities of blue-water navies, the author advances to air dominance's key advantages, which are a luxury of the very richest of nations. For example, the dominance of the U.S. Air Force and Space Force are symbols of America's decisive power. Yet, reconnaissance is the predominant purpose of airpower; that is, to deliver ordnance. Many great options do exist today, as the

Charles Nathan Swope holds degrees from Harvard University, Northeastern University, and University of Phoenix. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps for eight years in numerous positions of leadership while also completing three tours to Afghanistan and Iraq.

market price of unmanned aerial vehicles ($1,000 for a popular quality vehicle) makes for rare luxuries to become absolute reality. Martin says these are already being bought on Amazon to be militarized with relevant capabilities. Within the space domain, reconnaissance and communications satellites enable navigation. Any today must either have this capability or they have to form a partnership with a power that does. This evolves into how best to use cyber and information warfare to support your strategic and tactical objectives. For instance, having numerous methods of communication with a strategy for how and what to communicate and to whom while influencing relevant communities, including intelligentsia. Motivating the population to victory as president of the United States via major speeches at massive political events leading up to an international coalition's military campaign illustrates this point. This, reinforced with cyber capabilities to promote initiatives while thwarting attacks, makes a huge impact. "Social media is now shaping the overall narratives and perception of conflicts and geopolitical events. You should consider developing this capability if you wish to shape world opinion in real time" (p. 150). Yet, tactical cybersecurity is essential, a service that Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and all the other American technology giants perfect. The author then explains factual research on nuclear warfare, armament, disarmament, and nuclear deterrence with insight regarding biological and chemical options.

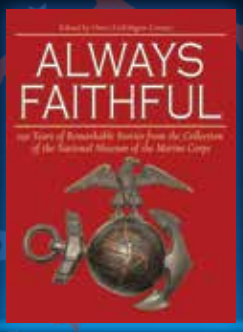
Part three initiates with "generalship and the art of conducting the orchestra of war" that is won having strategy and narrative that the world alongside our own population and military can work with (p. 179). This will prompt deciding how large to make the military force; having wealth will yield troop ratios of 3:1, 5:1, even 10:1 in high-risk environments. The U.S. Army is known to produce these metrics. Having the right capabilities and trained troops who have received orders and understand the plan is completed with proper planning in secrecy with wise counsel. Logistics will always dictate the tactical plan. Think of battlespace management as being three dimensional. Maintain a leadership style in which larger formations inform smaller formations of the overall plan, tasks objectives, yet allows the freedom of flexibility to achieve these goals how they see fit. Gain air supremacy. Conduct battlespace shaping. Use special forces for very high value return on investment. Acquire valuable assets that are rare, irreplaceable or are staffed by persons with great training and experience. These can be repurposed into achieving a nation's military purposes. Timing is everything. Maintain momentum. Leapfrog. Always own the highest ground with the best piece of real estate. This plethora of advice offered by the author moves into intelligence fusion, how technology produces an efficient, data-driven process that includes analysis plus pattern recognition. In the author's conclusion is his view on how wars end. The epilogue offers revelations pertaining to the future of warfare. War will not change due to technology, as war has a series of principles that will remain. Yet, "AI could change the essence of warfare in a way that is beyond human speculation" (p. 231).

This outstanding, clearly written, and articulated book is for statesmen, diplomats, and generals; junior to senior ranking officers; and students. Others may include all business executives, investment bankers and those in a competitive profession going into their prime. The commander in chief of a nation's military was this author's declared reason for writing this reference guide, and it goes well with Richard M. Swain and Albert C. Pierce's *The Armed Forces Officer*, Colonel Charles S. Oliviero's *Auftragstaktik*, and any introductory military course. Those that will benefit most may comprise examination of *The Marine Corps War College Strategy Primer*, the Central Intelligence Agency's *A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis*, and the *National Security Strategy of the United States*.

•1775•

NEW FOR 2025

Commandant's Professional Reading List celebrates 250 years of the Marine Corps



Expeditions with MCUP

For the full list of CMC Professional Reading List titles, visit www.usmcu.edu/MCUPress

MC UP

100+YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC HISTORY

INCLUDING SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OF CURATED ARTICLES

THE FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL DIGITAL ARCHIVE

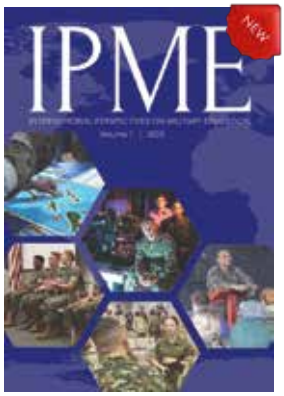
Scan and sign up to receive the *FSJ* in your inbox.

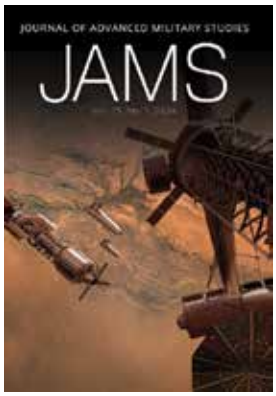
A treasure trove of primary source material and wisdom, this digital archive is a rich legacy of the U.S. Foreign Service and American diplomacy.

Subscribe to *The Foreign Service Journal* and the *FSJ* Insider: afsa.org/subscribe-fsj
afsa.org/fsj | afsa.org/fsj-archive | afsa.org/fsj-special-collections

MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY PRESS

MCUP publishes open access, scholarly books and journals on military history/heritage and national security topics in order to support excellence in Marine Corps University's professional military education, to inspire debate, and to advance knowledge for a diverse community of scholars, U.S. and allied military leaders, and policy makers. MCUP accepts book and journal submissions throughout the year.





Expeditions with MCUP

MES insights

MCUP
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY PRESS

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AND SUBMIT TODAY!

www.usmcu.edu/mcupress

The Journal of Military History

A quarterly publication of the Society for Military History

Individual Subscription: $70
Institutional Subscription: $120
Add $10 for postage outside the U.S. and Canada
Student online access: $25/year

The Society for Military History
George C. Marshall Library
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, Virginia USA 24450
www.smh-hq.org jmhsmh@vmi.edu